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

CONFESSIONS

By Keith Gisser



One of the big complaints I hear from racing fans is that we lose so many great horses to the breeding barn after their 3-year-old seasons. Efforts have been made to keep stallions on the track – the addition of many more rich races for the veterans, the so called Gural rule which declared that offspring of a stallion who did not race at 4 (unless injured) could not race in older stakes at The Meadowlands, Tioga or Vernon Downs, and other initiatives.

The Gural rule was well-intentioned, but as Editor Derick Giwner pointed out in these pages way back in December of 2022, “In theory, almost everyone can agree that the sentiment behind it - which is to keep the male stars of racing on the track through

their 4-year-old season - is legitimate, but functionally it has failed to produce the desired results and can leave a bad taste in the mouth of many who purchase rule-restricted yearlings.”

However, in recent years we have seen a relatively new phenomenon for the U.S. that keeps stallions on the racetrack. They do double duty – racing and breeding. I know some old-timers can tell stories of stallions breeding mares in the shedrow, but I am talking about legitimate breeding operations.

Catch The Fire, Mission Accepted, Father Patrick, Sunfire Bluechip and Great Vintage are just a few of the horses who have done double duty. Breeders Crown champ Gem Quality in Ohio has already posted three wins this season and has earned nearly as much this year as he did all of last year. His first mare was just confirmed in foal in mid-March. But most of these horses take a different path to double duty.

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CAPTAIN OPTIMISTIC

(Captaintreacherous - Cinamony - Art Official) p,2,1:49; 3,1:48 -'25 (\$1,573,723)



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(Always B Miki - Shebestingin - Bettors Delight) p,2,1:49.2; 3,1:48.1 (\$1,861,447)



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- U The sire of NJSS Champion **BE PERFECT BG** p,2,1:50.1 -'25 (\$166,803).

SIX PACK

(Muscle Mass - Pleasing Lady - Cantab Hall) 3,1:49.1 (\$1,973,661)



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The January announcement that Captain Optimistic would double-up with breeding and racing responsibilities this season caught everyone's attention, perhaps more than most.

As Joe Savare from the Captain Optimistic Syndicate said: "Short story - we wanted to improve on his portfolio. His best racing per Nancy [Takter, trainer] was late in the season. We figured we would put him back on the track. As well as he did, how could it hurt? Maybe we get some more big race wins."

Mike Gulotta, the owner of Deo Volente Farms, pointed out Captain Optimistic will be taking a slightly different track than Gem Quality. "We always thought he was a good horse with great stallion potential. Adding accomplishments will make him even more attractive. Plus, he is an outstanding looking individual," said Gulotta. "He is very professional and easy to get along with, making it easier. I've bred him to a few good mares. 50-60 mares would be a good number. I don't want to overuse him. The first mare he bred got in foal the first time. He is efficient and averages 12 billion sperm per collection [the average ejaculate is 4-12 billion]. We did this with Wishing Stone several years ago, too, and it worked out quite well."

As Captain Optimistic's trainer Nancy Takter commented: "We don't really do anything different with him. It's important that they take good care of themselves and maintain good weight. Sometimes when they are jumping [mounting a dummy mare to have sperm collected] they can get sore in the hocks or stifles. As a result, he will probably only breed 40-50 mares, no more than 60."

This tends to be the norm for these stallions. Breeding season is nearly over by the time the top races like the Graduate for 4-year-olds come around. There is only about six weeks of overlap, so the Captain Optimistic plan is similar to what Charles Taylor of Standing Stallions did with Catch The Fire, who bred and raced at ages 4 and 5.

"With [Catch The] Fire we were not sure as a 4-year-old how he would be on the Grand Circuit," he said. "So we kept him on a light schedule to start with. We were not going to let him get beat up as a racehorse, so he bred 86 mares first year, then the breeding season was basically done and then the big races began."

As to deciding what horses can handle the situation, Taylor is firm saying, "It takes a unique type of horse to be able to do it. The stallion has to show professionalism and good demeanor. They have to be very intelligent to take on both duties. It is a trait that if it passes to the babies, you have something special."

And that is why Taylor is truly excited about Breeders Crown champ Gem Quality, who stands his first season this year in Ohio, with a stud fee established by private treaty or negotiation.

"With Gem Quality we originally planned to breed no more than 40-50 mares, but he is very fertile. He has been at 21 billion [sperm per ejaculation], so we might go as high as 60 mares," said Taylor. "Everybody who sees him on the track likes him. Virgil Morgan Jr., his trainer, said 'There may be some that look as good as him, but there's none that look better.'"

Asked if "private treaty" instead of setting a fee could be a negative, Taylor replied, "It gives me more control. It probably strikes some folks as negative, but we want quality mares. We would prefer fewer mares of greater quality."

As to double duty, Taylor said it has overall been good for Gem Quality. "With Gem, I think it has helped him. It has helped his focus. It did change our schedule, giving him a week a month off instead of racing straight through."

One of the more interesting double-duty stallions I came across was Sunfire Blue Chip (full disclosure, within a week of you reading this my mare Maggie's Way should give birth to a Sunfire Blue Chip foal). He raced and bred from the time he was 5 through his 10 year-old season, although he serviced a relatively small number of mares from 6 through 10 in New Jersey.

Brielle Roman worked with Sunfire Blue Chip and Great Vintage when they were in the Jimmy Takter barn (and after he retired, Gary Candell). "They were two of the first horses I ever groomed, so I thought it was normal," said Roman about breeding and racing at the same time. "We would usually collect early in the week and then race on the weekend. Sunfire was always a gentleman with a pleasant attitude. He never even acted studdy!"

The same could not be said for Great Vintage, as Roman explained, "It did a lot to improve Great Vintage's attitude, as he could be a cranky horse. He always was much more pleasant and enthusiastic after he got collected. He had the turn into Walnridge memorized. As soon as you turned into their driveway the trailer would start rocking and he'd start screaming."

And that brings up an important issue with these double-duty studs. Logistics. Even though Sunfire Bluechip, Great Vintage and Captain Optimistic are/were stabled at the Takter Farm, collection takes place at Walnridge Farm which is only about 10 or 15 minutes away, making things pretty convenient.

Catch The Fire stands at Sugar Valley Farms, just a stone's throw from the Delaware County Fairgrounds, which host The Little Brown Jug. His pattern was only slightly different, as Mission Accepted's.

"With Fire we hired Cam and Jessica Mccown and they trained him in

Delaware. They picked him up and I would collect him and send him back to the fairgrounds, but he would spend weekends here at the farm at 4 and 5," said Sugar Valley Farms' Joe McLead. "We did the same with Mission Accepted for the Burkes. Ronnie Steck prepped him at Delaware. They got plenty of time off and then they prepped to race since their major stakes were later in the year. I don't think it's a problem for anyone racing and breeding."

Gem Quality's routine is a bit different. He is stabled at trainer Virgil Morgan's Winners Circle training facility, South of Columbus in Ohio. He stands at Abby Farms, which is a two-hour ship.

"Virgil leaves someone with him and he is on a truck right back. He is smart and takes care of business," said Charles Taylor.

It will be interesting to see if this trend continues, but everyone I talked to believes it is an overall positive for the sport. Taylor said "It's absolutely good for the sport. Stallions get syndicated and it is just a money pay - keep them in front of the public."

Gulotta added, "When a stallion retires, people forget about the horse. If he is racing and breeding, he will be front and center. We need our heroes. I remember Cam Fella. I remember Lis Mara. He didn't come into his own until 4 and 5. He won the Canadian Pacing Derby in 2006 and 2007. That's exciting. I would love to have the same for Captain Optimistic."

That's it for this time. Now go cash. Hopefully on a stud who is doing double duty like Gem Quality or Captain Optimistic AND on one of their offspring.



CONRAD PHOTO

Gem Quality has been racing at Miami Valley while simultaneously standing in Ohio this year.

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Kelley preparing his Mass-breds for Oak Grove and beyond



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [✕ BergmanJay](#)

As the harness racing landscape has shifted over the last decade, many trainers have had to alter their plans and refocus on new paths to success. For trainer Paul Kelley that has led to a restructuring that finds him focusing on dual eligibility, with most of his horses fitting the unique Massachusetts Sire Stakes program while also having various options in other locations. With 14 horses currently in training at Sunshine Meadows, Kelley is putting the finishing touches on his three sophomores while preparing most of his 2-year-olds for action later this summer.

Leading the select group of 3-year-olds is the Massachusetts juvenile champion from 2025 Geologic, a gelded son of Captain Corey that showed improvement with each start. Kelley has slow-played his hand and thus far has not been in any hurry to take on horses outside of that region.

“That’s been my plan with them as 2-year-olds,” said Kelley. “I like to focus on Massachusetts and bring them along slowly.”

While Geologic was eligible to race in Pennsylvania, Kelley was more than happy to wait a year and allow the horse to develop enough to tackle tougher competition.

“I know in Massachusetts that the fields are short and you’re not racing against top competition so it’s hard to gauge a horse, but I think Geologic has the ability to race against horses in Pennsylvania,” Kelley said.

Geologic made his first appearance as a sophomore in qualifiers last Saturday (March 28) at Sunshine Meadows and finished off his mile with a 27-flat final quarter to complete a mile timed in 1:55.

“I’m going to bring him back one more time to qualify and then we’re going to send him to Oak Grove,” said Kelley.

With the Massachusetts Sire Stakes program later in the year, Kelley figured that the new Oak Grove Trotting Derby might be a perfect spot to find out just how well Geologic will do when pitted against more open company. The decision to nominate and race in the Oak Grove Trotting Derby had much to do with the timing of the race on the schedule.

“That’s why I’m getting him ready earlier in the year,” said Kelley of the March start to the sophomore season. “I know there will be some very good horses in that race, but I’m thinking that some trainers with Hambletonian horses won’t want to rush them to be at their best in May.”

Geologic earned \$165K in his first year on the track, with all eight races at Plainridge Park. He won three races and finished second in four, earning a 1:56 1/5 career-best clocking in the Sire Stakes final last October 30. That he’s already trotted faster in his first qualifier this year suggests Kelley is realizing the potential he was looking for with his limited 2-year-old racing season.

“We were looking specifically for horses that had dual eligibility in Massachusetts,” Kelley said, reflecting on the sale strategy for the \$82,000 Lexington Selected buy in 2024. “I was always a big fan of Captain Corey, so this colt was a natural fit.”

Geologic is from the first crop of Captain Corey and is the third foal from Crystalline, a daughter of Chapter Seven that has produced a pair of \$100K-plus winners from her first two foals by Six Pack and Tactical Landing. In just one year of racing, Geologic is already the mare’s highest earner.

Kelley also qualified a Walner-sired filly at Sunshine Meadows named Adios My Lindy. Like her stablemate she competed exclusively in Massachusetts as a freshman.

“She’s going to qualify again,” said Kelley. “She’s eligible to the filly event at Oak Grove but we’ll see how she progresses. I’m not sure if she’ll go in that race.”

A winner in Sire Stakes action as a freshman, Adios My Lindy was plagued by breaks including a miscue in the lucrative final in 2025.

Kelley has but one 4-year-old in his stable but he feels that could be enough given what Corner Store showed on the racetrack as a sophomore. The daughter of Six Pack came to life for Kelley towards the end of her 3-year-old season, giving the trainer added belief that she could blossom into a serious talent this year.

“She just kept getting better and better,” Kelley said of the filly that trotted to a surprising 1:51 3/5 victory in a Massachusetts Sire Stakes event on September 30. That mile was achieved on the front end with Corner Store flashing speed not seen before. Prior to those races Kelley had Corner Store racing in New Jersey where she faced division champion Yo Tillie with limited success.

“She’s training back well and we’ve put her in stakes for 4-year-old mares and some later in the year against the top mares,” said Kelley, anticipating that Corner Store will blossom on the national scene.

A few years back Kelley remained in New Jersey through the winter months but over the last few years has wintered in Florida. “At the time I stayed in New Jersey it was about keeping good help,” said Kelley. “It’s hard to ship back and forth and keep good people.”



TOM MELANSON PHOTO

Geologic won his Massachusetts Sire Stakes final in 2025 and has his sights set on Grand Circuit competition this year.

Nonetheless, the return to Florida, where Kelley has a residence, has worked out well, with Kelley not missing time with 10 freshman he has in training. The stable will split to a degree with the older horses scheduled to ship to Oak Grove on April 11 while the remaining freshman finish out preparation before a May departure to Vernon Downs where Kelley hopes to be centered with horses eligible in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey during the early part of the campaign before the Massachusetts program kicks in.

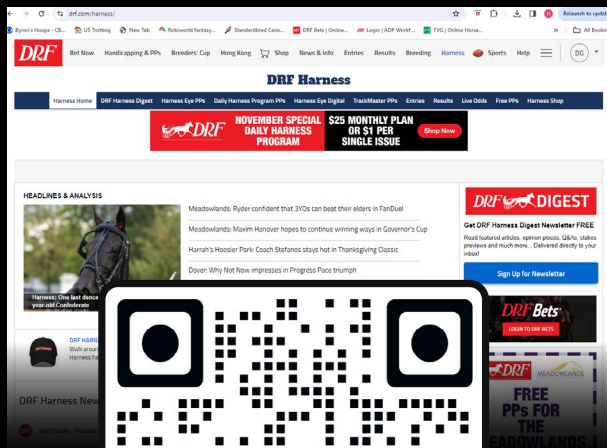
While it’s well too early to predict just how freshman will pan out when put into action, Kelley does have a Back Of The Neck-sired sister to Geologic that has dual eligibility in New York and Massachusetts. It’s the first crop for Back Of The Neck – a son of internationally renowned stallion Ready Cash – who has just 44 registered foals including Geologic’s sister.

For smaller stables sometimes it appears a daunting task to take on the sport’s more well-stocked programs, but Kelley has a solid plan that has seen his stable’s success grow over the last few years. In 2025 Kelley’s stable enjoyed its best year of the last decade, with 29 wins in just 149 starts and earnings of \$670K. This year’s foundation, with a little luck, could see those numbers grow significantly.

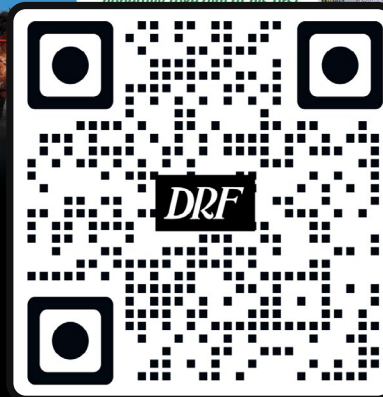


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EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner ✕ @harnessveguy

Sports betting vs. horse logic

Outside of the commonality that both involve people making wagers, it is worth considering whether sports and horse betting have anything in common.

It didn't really hit me until the other day when listening to some sports betting "experts" (in quotes because unless you derive your major source of income from betting I hesitate to give anyone that tag) talk about their analysis and selections for the NCAA tournament. The discussion centered on the point spread for a game and whether a shift in the line from 6.5 points to 8 points was enough for someone to consider jumping ship on the favorite in favor of the underdog. In some ways it would be like going off a horse because the odds were too low, but it really is apples and oranges.

Lines move in sports betting to reflect the action being taken on a game, which keeps the possibility of making a decent profit in reach. For instance, the vig (juice or fee) for most lines hover between +100 (Bet \$10 to win \$10) and -140 (Bet \$10 to win \$7). So if a line was -12.5 points with a vig of -115, you could bet \$10 and win \$8.69 if the team is victorious by 13 or more points. Now if you remove the points, the cost to make a bet on that favorite moves from -115 to -750 or you can bet the underdog to pull off the upset and get +525. That means your same \$10 bet returns a profit of \$1.33 if you go with the chalk and they win, or \$52.50 with the "dog".

Converting the above to horse racing, the +100 option is the equivalent of an even money horse, the -115 would be about 4-5, the -140 is 3-5 and the +525 is about 5-1. Where it gets tricky is with the heavy favorite at -750. The loose equivalent is 1-5 in horse betting and common sense will tell you that people play these horses all the time because otherwise they couldn't be 1-5 in a common pool wagering system. Some bettors will even play a daily double with two 1-5 horses so they can get a return as high as 3-5. How many people do you know who play two -750 sports teams to get about -355 (between 1-5 and 2-5)? It just doesn't happen very often and I can understand that to some extent. What boggles my mind is why more people don't play two -300 teams they feel confident in to get a healthy -130 (between 3-5 and 4-5). Outside of the greed factor where people want to win big chunks of money rather than grind out small wins, there doesn't seem to be any logic to avoid what you deem to be a good bet. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying playing 3-5 shots in horse racing or 3-5 parlays in sports makes sense all the time, but sometimes you have to take what seems most logical in terms of winning versus what might produce the biggest return.

Getting back to the discussion of "experts" from earlier, why don't they talk about alternate lines and perhaps buying points to get a more attractive number? There is such a huge advantage in sports for people to get the price they want on the bet they want whereas in horse racing we are at the mercy of what the pari-mutuel system provides.

There are many numbers thrown around above and hopefully you're sticking with me on the point, which is that the thought process between sports and horses couldn't be any different and I'm not sure why. While we are looking for the best value in both, no one is tossing out a 1-5 shot in horse racing that they think will probably win to bet a 5-1 that has a very small chance of success. Yet rarely do you see people taking advantage of a sports team that seems like a lock at a similar price. There is a risk-reward conversation that goes on in the horse handicapper's head that doesn't seem to be at play when it comes to wagering on sports, which admittedly is more of a black and white, yes or no, outcome.

There are clearly many differences between sports betting and playing horses. The industries are regulated differently and with that the information provided to the wagering public is far from equal. I couldn't argue with someone that felt having more statistical data and health information provides more certainty when betting sports versus horses. And as much as I'm a lover of harness racing, truth be told, it is easier to win betting on sports, especially if you play it conservatively and don't swing for the fences.

It may be counterintuitive to some but in the end, whether playing sports or horses, the goal is to win money. Sometimes I think in the lust for large profits people forget this key factor: Being selective and sticking to your best opinions – regardless of whether you prefer sports or horses – is the best recipe for success. In that, the two forms of betting are indeed quite similar.

LONE PK8 WINNER A LIFELONG HARNESS PLAYER

Thanks to an email from a longtime Harness Eye customer we were able to track down the lone winner of the Pick 8 at The Meadowlands last week. Peter Giannopolous was the lucky player who cashed for \$162,454 (CDN) on a \$432 investment.

A regular Meadowlands and Woodbine Mohawk Park player, Giannopolous said he started dipping his toes into the pool on week two and took it more seriously as the pool reached into the upper \$80K range. The 61-year-old admitted that he got very lucky.

"I got lucky with both of my singles. The first one with Brad Chisholm driving [Bee Positive] just got up at the wire and [Always Be City] looked all done at the half first-up and in the stretch he found life again," said Giannopolous, who was actually rooting for the wrong horse in the last leg. "I had two, six and eight but I didn't see the payouts so I was rooting for the eight since the six was the favorite. My friend told me afterwards that if the eight won I would've shared the pool with someone else. I couldn't believe I was the only winner. I was shocked. The highest horse only paid \$7.00"

Giannopolous said that he had been playing between \$250 and \$450 each day into the wager. He added that the score at The Meadowlands on March 27 was by far the biggest of his life, citing a \$30,000 win at Mohawk Park about five years ago and a couple of \$25,000 Pick 5 cashes previously at The Meadowlands.

"Five years ago I never played the Pick 5. I was an exacta and trifecta player but my buddy Jason was driving me nuts about the Pick 5 at Mohawk. Then I started getting into them and now I'm addicted to them."

An owner of a breakfast and lunch restaurant in Canada, he admitted that he's far from homeless but still called it life-changing money.

"It's \$160,000 you didn't have the day before. I'll be able to pay off some bills and take a nice vacation," said Giannopolous, who spent a large portion of his life in the Chicago area and loved that circuit. "Outside of The Meadowlands I think it was the best racing around with tracks like Sportman's Park, Maywood and Balmoral."

As for the future, Giannopolous isn't going to rest on his laurels. "I told my wife I'm going to hit it again this Friday night," he said with a laugh. "And then I'll bet it Saturday if I don't hit it Friday. What else do I have to do?"

The carryover for Friday sits at \$52,179 and starts in race three.



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Bartlett with another strong hand in McIntyre second leg

By Jay Bergman

If first impressions matter in this sport, Louies Girl N, a 6-year-old imported pacing mare, has the makings of a superstar. A demonstrative performance in the opening round of the MGM Ursula McIntyre series at Yonkers Raceway on March 27 marked the arrival. Now driver Jason Bartlett hopes her winning ways continues in round two this Friday with the Per Engblom trainee landing post six in one of four \$50,000 divisions.

“She’s got an incredible burst of speed when you tip her out,” said Bartlett of the mare he’s been driving with regularity. “She’s not a big mare and she fits this track (Yonkers) perfectly.”

Louies Girl N was raced patiently in the opening leg of the series, with Bartlett allowing the formidable Rocket Deo to dictate the pace. Following a relaxed 56 4/5 first half it appeared as if Rocket Deo would have the advantage in a final half sprint, but those hopes were dashed almost instantly when Bartlett asked Louies Girl N to respond on the backstretch.

“That was a great mare she went around,” said Bartlett, who had driven Rocket Deo a week earlier and was speaking from experience. Louies Girl N would flash a 28 final quarter to seal the victory.

On Friday, Louies Girl N faces six rivals including Rocket Deo (post 3) in the fifth race and first of the four divisions. Now undefeated in eight starts since coming to North America, there is obviously untapped potential.

“I’ve never pulled the earplugs yet,” said Bartlett, reflecting on Louies Girl N’s power in reserve that she’s indicated. “Even in the race at Pocono that she won (by a neck) she did it on her own and she scoped sick that day.”

While her round-one victory was impressive, the McIntyre series is made up of five preliminary legs before the final and this week’s second round could be more difficult with the outside draw and a few more top mares to her inside. In addition to Rocket Deo, the division includes Always Bstunning N, a solid third-place finisher in round one. Always Bstunning N is a 7-year-old by Always B Miki that won 12 races in 2025 and landed post four on Friday.

Last year Bartlett guided another daughter of Always B Miki named Aardie B Miki N to capture the final of this series when it was titled the Blue Chip Matchmaker. Aardie B Miki N returned for a chance to repeat in this year’s edition and was a solid second to Coastal Babe N in the first leg.

“I was very happy with her effort,” said Bartlett of the Per Engblom-trained 6-year-old. “She was coming off three weeks out and she had a breathing issue that had to be corrected.”

Aardie B Miki N has won three of her seven starts this year and drew on the outside (post 7) in Friday’s third division and seventh race. Bartlett was pleased the way Aardie B Miki N was able to leave the gate and that may be something he needs to consider again this week.

Coastal Babe N once again has the post advantage over last year’s series champion and the daughter of Downbytheseaside looks for her



MIKE LIZZI PHOTO

Louies Girl N is perfect in eight starts since coming to the United States in 2025.

second straight leg from the pole with Yannick Gingras in the bike. A winner in three of her four starts in North America for trainer Jared Bako, Coastal Babe N has won 12 of her 24 career starts.

Bartlett did find at least one favorable draw in Friday’s quartet of McIntyre divisions, with Huntress landing the pole position in the final \$50,000 stanza carded as race eight. A 7-year-old mare by Huntsville, Huntress makes her Yonkers return for trainer Virgil Morgan Jr. following a pair of qualifiers at The Meadowlands.

“I thought she was great in both qualifiers,” said Bartlett.

On March 21, Huntress set all the fractions and won in 1:51 4/5, turning back Bath Bomb, a mare she’ll meet again on Friday. In her second qualifier on March 28 she cruised in 1:53 2/5, pacing home in 27 4/5. “That was a pretty good last quarter considering how windy it was,” said Bartlett.

Huntress will face a solid group of mares, with first-leg winner Tick A Loch A (post 5) and first-leg runner-up Tarapasta (post 6) a pair that figure to be threats in the series. Tick A Loch A has been first or second in six of her seven starts this season. Tarapasta lost her action briefly at the quarter pole sacrificing position in her first-leg performance. The Travis Alexander-trained mare recovered nicely but was up against it pacing into a 55 2/5 final half mile posted by race winner Seaside Diva.

Speaking of Seaside Diva, the Ron Burke-trained mare looks to repeat her effort from the first round in Friday’s sixth race division. The 25-time career winner drew the pole position in a field of six and may have to work a bit harder than the 29 opening quarter she needed a week ago to seize control of this race. Walkin On Sunshine (post 4) had to take an early tuck in her division in last week’s first leg of the series and that made it difficult for her to track down Coastal Babe N. A multi-leg winner in this series a year ago, Walkin On Sunshine looks to regain winning form as well.

First post for Yonkers Raceway’s 10-race Friday program is listed at 6:45 p.m.

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Emily Bost feeling grateful for Weiss starter Dilly Hanover

By Ken Weingartner

Dilly Hanover got his career off to a perfect start, and co-owner/trainer Emily Bost hopes he will continue to put his best foot forward when the Bobby Weiss Series for 3-year-old male trotters begins next week at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania.

Unraced as a 2-year-old, Dilly Hanover won his debut this past Tuesday (March 31) by four lengths in 1:56 3/5 at Pocono Downs. Driven by Braxten Boyd, the son of International Moni-Dornello went to the front from post seven and set all the fractions, including a 56 3/5 clocking for the second half of the one-mile race.

“We were all very impressed,” said Bost, who owns Dilly Hanover with R K 4 Racing and Bruce Potter. “My partners were tears-of-joy happy. I couldn’t have asked for anything more. I just wanted him to have a good experience, and he sure did. And he was a gentleman the whole time. He’s a true professional.”

Dilly Hanover was purchased for \$20,000 at the 2024 Standardbred Horse Sale. His dam, Dornello, had nine previous foals – each with at least one lifetime victory – led by Grand Circuit winner Lauderdale. Dilly Hanover’s second dam is 1990 Dan Patch Award winner Me Maggie, and a deeper look into his family finds millionaires Oh Well, Lifetime Pursuit, Southwind Tyrion, Whiskey Tax, and Credit Winner.

“We loved his video; we thought he trotted very nice in his video,” Bost said about buying Dilly Hanover as a yearling. “We always go to put our hands on the horses and see them before we buy them. We liked the look of him. He was small, but he was nicely put together, and he seemed reasonable to deal with. We took a chance.”

Dilly Hanover qualified once as a 2-year-old, but after a third-place finish in 2:03 3/5 at Pocono, he was turned out and given time to mature.

“He just had some growing to do,” Bost said. “I have great partners and they always want to do the right thing for the horse, so we just shut him down for about seven months. We turned him out and just let him do some growing – and boy did he grow. We started him back in late December, early January, and it seems like the time off did him well. He’s come back great. He’s a stunning horse to look at. He turns heads. It’s nice to see that is translating onto the track so far.”

On Monday (April 6), Dilly Hanover will compete in the first of three \$17,500 first-round Weiss divisions for sophomore colt and gelding trotters. He will leave from post five in a field of eight, with Boyd in the sulky, and is the 3-1 second choice on the morning line. The 5-2 favorite is Bee Positive, a son of Walner out of 2013 Dan Patch and O’Brien Horse of the Year Bee A Magician, who got his first career victory in 1:55 3/5 last week at the Meadowlands.

“I just hope he continues to do well,” Bost said about Dilly Hanover, who is staked to the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes, PA All-Stars, Liberty Bell and Simpson Memorial this season. “We’re hopeful. He trots beautifully; he always has. He’s got a great gait. He’s willing. On the track, and in the barn, he listens to you; he’s not unreasonable. He’s a lovebug, too. He loves his scratches, loves his cookies.

“He’s just an all-around nice horse – and I’m so grateful that he’s in mine.”

The morning-line favorites in the remaining two Weiss divisions Monday are Drinking Problems, who is 5-2 in the second, and Confident Volo, who is 5-2 in the third.

Drinking Problems, a son of Bar Hopping-Designed To Be and half-brother to 2019 Dan Patch Trotter of the Year Greenshoe, has hit the board in seven of 12 career races, winning two, for trainer Nancy Takter. The earner of \$30,360 lifetime will be driven by Jason Bartlett.

Confident Volo, a son of Bar Hopping-Context, has hit the board in five of eight lifetime starts, winning two. He is 1-for-1 this year for trainer Todd Buter and has earned \$28,281 in his career. He will be driven by Tyler Buter.

The Bobby Weiss Series, named after the longtime trackman at Pocono, also features divisions for 3-year-old male pacers, beginning Saturday (April 4), and for 3-year-old female pacers and trotters, both beginning Tuesday (April 7). Following three preliminary rounds, the top horses from each group will meet in \$50,000 finals beginning April 25.

For more about the Bobby Weiss Series, click [here](#).

Racing begins at 1 p.m. (EDT) at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania.



CURTIS SALONICK PHOTO

Unraced as a 2YO, Dilly Hanover won his career debut at Pocono Downs and hopes to continue his roll in the Weiss Series on Monday.

NYRA to increase horse racing broadcasts as FanDuelTV phases out

The New York Racing Association plans to add signals from top-tier tracks to its daily racing broadcasts on networks associated with FOX and is exploring the creation of a broadcast channel that would provide round-the-clock coverage of racing, officials for NYRA said on Wednesday.

The two-pronged effort has been rapidly formulated over the past two days in the wake of reports on Friday (3/27) that FanDuelTV will wind down its studio operations by the end of this year and cease operations at the end of 2027. FanDuelTV, formerly known as TVG, has been a constant presence in the racing industry for the past 25 years.

The FanDuel decision has generated intense discussion among racing officials over the past five days, and those discussions have accelerated since Monday, according to multiple racing officials who spoke with Daily Racing Form earlier this week. Several of those officials had said that they had already reached out to NYRA or were planning to speak with NYRA about an expansion of the offerings on its FOX productions.

“I’m sure we are going to have discussions with FOX,” said one executive at a prominent racing company who was granted anonymity to discuss talks with competitors. “We were on TVG. So where do we go now?”

Tony Allevato, NYRA’s chief revenue officer and a former producer at TVG, said on Wednesday that FOX had offered NYRA its support on bolstering its existing television broadcasts with signals from top-tier tracks while simultaneously forming a streaming option that would be styled on the NFL’s RedZone, which hops from game to game on Sundays.

Allevato stressed that the planning is in its preliminary stages but that NYRA intended to move forward quickly.

“We’re looking at coming up with something that is easily accessible that would allow customers to watch and receive content from multiple racetracks,” said Allevato on Wednesday. “We’re not looking to replicate what we do with ‘America’s Day at the Races’ or ‘Saratoga Live’ or do exactly what FanDuel TV was doing, but looking at a new product that would be available at no cost to fans.”

Earlier in the week, many racing officials had expressed concern about FanDuelTV’s pending demise, but many also said that the broadcast and streaming markets have changed so dramatically in the past several years that the channel may have run its course.

[READ MORE](#)

RACE OF THE WEEK

5 YONKERS FRI

1 Mile Pace THE MGM URSULA MCINTYRE F&M PACING SERIES LEG #2. Purse \$50,000

S1 PICK 5 (5-6-7-8-9) | S2 EXACTA | S2 TRIPLE | S1.0 SUPERFECTA

1 TURN THE PAGE N(L)

51:50 (5/8) \$9,998

b m 7, by Vincent, Shea Monke by Sands A Flyin

Ronald L Cushing, Waterville, ME; Kevin R Swyck Swartz Creek, MI

Last 5 Sts-\$44,990

1:52.2 PeD 5/8

1:50.3 PrC 5/8

26 YR 2 0 0 2 \$9,240 26 5 3 0 2 \$44,990
25 YR 1 1 4 4 \$100,860 25 Tot 28 5 4 6 \$166,448
24 YR 1 0 0 0 \$0 Life 62 25 10 0 \$22,416

8-1 R. Cushing 11-2-1-3 (182)

H. Cushing 11-2-1-3 (182)

27 Mar 26	4YR	fst45 ⁵⁰	29	:58	1:24	1:53	UM #1	50000	1	2 ²	2 ²	3 ²	3 ⁴	3 ⁵	1	RonCushing	HJCushing	292	291	273	282	1:54	89	-1.4w	L.53 SesDeDiva Tarapasta TrmThPage	Pkt,no bid-6
9 Mar 26	10PcD	fst65 ⁵⁰	27	:55	1:23	1:52	M W/O	27500	7	6 ²	4 ²	2 ²	1no	1	1	RonCushing	HJCushing	273	283	272	284	1:52	97	-2.3w	L.50 TrmThPageAviClaire StrutsVle	Long unc, game-8
2 Mar 26	10PcD	fst35 ⁵⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:53	M W/O	27500	3	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	3 ³	1	1	RonCushing	HJCushing	271	29	282	284	1:53	87	-3.4w	L.30 TrmThPageDnysMrcy Lydeo	Pkt,all out-6
22 Feb 26	6Stg	gd34 ⁴⁰	28	:58	1:27	1:57	FMOPENHCP	16500	8	6 ⁶	5 ⁴	4 ²	4 ²	1	1	RonCushing	HJCushing	294	294	284	29	1:57	81		L.48 TrmThPageWaitforr MissIdaho	-8
13 Feb 26	9YR	fst32 ²⁰	28	:57	1:25	1:54	FNW3000L5	27000	3	4 ⁴	4 ⁴	4 ⁴	4 ⁴	3 ⁴	3 ⁴	RonCushing	HJCushing	291	29	282	283	1:51	86	-3.7w	L.24 LydsLvsStrvsTrmThPg	Sat,trafic ln,ang,no bid-7
4 Feb 26	4MR	fst22 ²⁰	28	:58	1:28	1:58	Qua	20000	2	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ³	1 ³	1 ³	RonCushing	HJCushing	282	301	301	294	1:58	83		Lrln TrmThPageAveHring SweepPhy	-7
19 Dec 25	3YR	wf50 ⁴⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:54	FM INV	75000	1	3 ³	3 ⁴	3 ²	3 ²	8 ⁴	1	RonCushing	HJCushing	273	292	281	30	1:55	88	-8.4w	L.11.42 MyReDeAcushMchSikCloud	1st up,stad,lr3-8
12 Dec 25	8YR	fst30 ²⁰	27	:57	1:25	1:53	FNW3000L5	27000	8	8 ¹⁴	8 ¹⁴	8 ¹⁴	8 ¹⁴	8 ¹⁴	8 ¹⁴	RonCushing	HJCushing	30	291	28	274	1:55	87	-5.5w	L.78.84 AcushMchDnysMrcyMyRdS	Trail,rd,stay lane-8
5 Dec 25	7YR	fst31 ²⁰	28	:58	1:26	1:54	FNW3000L5	27000	6	6 ⁸	6 ⁷	6 ⁵	6 ⁴	6 ³	1	RonCushing	HJCushing	293	301	28	274	1:55	85	-3.7w	L.18.54 AcushMchDnysPtmBntsBtB	Sat,bk,3rd,ov no bid-7
21 Nov 25	9YR	fst49 ²⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:53	FNW2000L5	23000	2	3 ⁴	3 ⁴	3 ²	3 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	RonCushing	HJCushing	282	281	273	283	1:53	97	+1.5w	L.4.70 TrmThPgCchldnDgsBb	Sat,2w,bf 3/4,game-8

b m 6, by Heston Blue Chip, Fourfour Hanover by Captainreacherous

Mark R Howard, Federalsburg, MD

Last 5 Sts-\$33,000

*1:51.3 DD 5/8

1:51.1 Rcr 5/8

26 YR 1 0 0 0 \$4,200 26 Tot 8 3 3 1 \$51,750
25 YR 0 0 0 0 -Life 21 7 4 2 \$80,130
24 YR 0 0 0 0 -Life 81 24 18 10 \$360,943

2 SQUARE DEAL (L)

51:51.1 (5/8) Q \$6,469

b m 5, by Captaintreacherous, Rocklaman by Rockroll Hanover

Morrison Racing Stables Indiana, PA

Last 5 Sts-\$67,500

1:54 YR

*1:49.2 PeD 5/8

26 YR 2 1 1 0 \$30,000 26 Tot 1 1 1 0 \$30,000
25 YR 2 1 1 0 \$177,200 25 Tot 15 8 1 1 \$215,865
24 YR 0 0 0 0 -Life 39 20 4 3 \$276,454

12-1 S. Zeron 5-0-0-2 (000)

W. Reynolds 1-0-0-0 (000)

27 Mar 26	1YR	fst45 ⁵⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:52	UM #1	50000	4	2 ¹	2 ²	3 ³	3 ⁶	4 ⁸	1	ScZeron	WiReynlds	272	293	283	284	1:54	90	-1.4w	L.25 LouisGirRktDChldn	Ld,shld,ang ln,no bid-7
11 Mar 26	10DD	fst73 ⁹⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:51	MWOSLCTHC	20000	3	4 ⁴	2 ¹	1no	2	2	2	AlMorgan	WiReynlds	264	284	27	29	1:51	104		L.*90 RacnHngry SquireDeal JetPropd	-8
4 Mar 26	9DD	gd46 ⁶⁰	27	:54	1:23	1:52	MWOSLCTHC	21000	8	3 ¹	2 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	2 ¹	1	AlMorgan	WiReynlds	274	273	282	29	1:52	97		L.15.10 JetPropd SquireDeal Ballast	-9
11 Feb 26	2DD	fst37 ⁵⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:52	Open Hcp FM	25000	5	1 ⁰	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	AlMorgan	WiReynlds	264	281	28	29	1:52	98		L.2.30 SquireDeal FctryGrl JetPropd	-6
4 Feb 26	10DD	gd29 ⁵⁰	27	:55	1:24	1:53	Open Hcp FM	25000	3	1 ¹	2 ¹	3 ¹	4 ¹	2 ¹	1	AlMorgan	WiReynlds	263	281	284	29	1:53	89		L.7.00 RacnHngry SquireDeal Ballast	-7
21 Jan 26	10DD	fst38 ⁵⁰	26	:54	1:22	1:50	Open Hcp FM	25000	4	3 ¹	3 ³	3 ³	3 ¹	3 ¹	1	AlMorgan	WiReynlds	264	281	274	281	1:51	101		L.3.70 FctryGrl Ballast SquireDeal	-8
14 Jan 26	10DD	fst46 ⁷⁰	27	:57	1:24	1:53	MW07000L5	18000	5	2 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	1 ¹	1	AlMorgan	WiReynlds	28	291	273	281	1:53	91		L.*1.00 CndyJo SquireDeal SovrnHw	Dh-7
7 Jan 26	10DD	fst47 ⁷⁰	27	:55	1:23	1:51	MW07000L5	18000	4	2 ¹	1 ²	1 ²	1 ¹	1 ¹	1	AlMorgan	WiReynlds	273	274	274	282	1:51	98		L.*1.50 SquireDeal CndyJo SovrnHw	-8
31 Dec 25	2DD	fst33 ²⁰	28	:56	1:24	1:53	FMW6601L5	7500	4	3 ²	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	AlMorgan	WiReynlds	282	281	281	284	1:53	90		L.*.20 SquireDeal KepTlght GrndStls	-6
17 Dec 25	8DD	fst43 ²⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:52	MW07000L5	18000	3	6 ⁹	3 ²	2 ¹	8 ⁸	8 ⁸	1	PaBerry	WiReynlds	28	281	28	30	1:54	91		L.17.60 PstDght CndyJo SovrnHw	-8

b m 5, by Captaintreacherous, Rocklaman by Rockroll Hanover

Morrison Racing Stables Indiana, PA

Last 5 Sts-\$67,500

1:54 YR

*1:49.2 PeD 5/8

26 YR 2 1 1 0 \$30,000 26 Tot 1 1 1 0 \$30,000
25 YR 2 1 1 0 \$177,200 25 Tot 15 8 1 1 \$215,865
24 YR 0 0 0 0 -Life 39 20 4 3 \$276,454

3 ROCKET DEO (L)

31:48.3 (1) \$15,000

b m 7, by Always B Miki, Simply Stunning by Art Major

Richard Pollicucci, South Easton, MA

Last 5 Sts-\$43,500

1:55.4 YR

*1:49.3 PrC 5/8

26 YR 1 0 0 1 \$6,000 26 Tot 1 0 0 1 \$6,000
25 YR 2 1 1 0 \$177,200 25 Tot 15 8 1 1 \$215,865
24 YR 0 0 0 0 -Life 61 18 8 8 \$292,487

5-2 D. Dunn 4-0-1-1 (000)

Bt. Pelling 4-2-1-1 (500)

27 Mar 26	1YR	fst45 ⁵⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:52	UM #1	50000	6	1 ⁰	1 ²	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	1	DeDunn	BrGPelling	271	292	282	29	1:54	94	-1.4w	L.4.31 LsGir RktD Chldn	Usd pst 1/4,ldr 2nd-7
20 Mar 26	3YR	fst53 ⁵⁰	28	:57	1:25	1:54	FM INV	35000	5	5 ⁴	5 ⁷	5 ⁴	5 ³	5 ³	1	JaBarttt	BrGPelling	29	294	272	274	1:54	93	+6.5w	L.1.52 RocketDeo FmPgStyCstBb	2nd,ov,ang ln,drvng-5
14 Mar 26	5M1	fst50 ⁵⁰	29	:57	1:26	1:54	Qua	8	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ²	2 ¹	1 ¹	1	BrChishlm	BrGPelling	294	28	29	28	1:54	4		Lrln RocketDeo BathBomb PmsPg	Pkt,room,ldr,drvng-8	
28 Feb 26	5M1	fst38 ⁵⁰	30	:59	1:28	1:54	Qua	3	2 ¹	2 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1	BrChishlm	BrGPelling	304	283	283	264	1:54	4		Lrln RocketDeo Fansville PksPU	Pkt,ldr,bf 1/2,saley-3	
21 Feb 26	2M1	fst50 ⁵⁰	28	:56	1:26	1:54	Qua	1	3 ⁴	3 ²	3 ²	1	1	1	BrChishlm	BrGPelling	29	274	30	274	1:54	3		Lrln RktD CzttSmjYHw	Sat,ang pst 3/4,handy-6	
26 Sep 25	8YR	fst74 ²⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:53	FM INV	39000	7	1 ²	1 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	1	1	JoStratt	BrGPelling	274	284	282	292	1:54	94	+6.6w	L.2.31 SwhynwDkEtrFmPgSty	Usd pst 1/4,ldr,tred-7
13 Sep 25	4YR	fst76 ²⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:53	FM INV	50000	6	3 ⁴	3 ³	3 ²	2 ¹	2	1	JaBarttt	BrGPelling	274	282	274	29	1:52	101	+4.5w	L.*.39 RocketDeoDogsBabeSikCld	Tuck,1st up,saley-7
5 Sep 25	5PH	fst81 ²⁰	26	:56	1:23	1:51	Open	39000	5	2 ²	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1	AnMcCarthy	BrGPelling	264	292	271	281	1:53	100	+6.0w	L.*.20 RocketDeo TkeYOp RacnHngry	-7
22 Aug 25	2YR	fst79 ²⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:53	FM INV	25000	5	2 ¹	1 ²	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	1	JaBarttt	BrGPelling	264	29	281	29	1:53	97	+5.4w	L.*.50 RocketDeo Huntress SilkCloud	Pkt,ang ln,drvng-6
11 Aug 25	10PcD	fst88 ²⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:51	Mw02000L1	25000	8	3 ⁰	1 ¹	1no	2 ¹	7 ²	1	JaPelling	BrGPelling	262	29	28	28	1:52	99	+4.3w	L.*.80 TkeYOpK TurnOnThC Huntress	Pkt,press,tred-8

b m 7, by Always B Miki, Simply Stunning by Art Major

Richard Pollicucci, South Easton, MA

Last 5 Sts-\$43,500

1:55.4 YR

*1:49.3 PrC 5/8

26 YR 1 0 0 1 \$6,000 26 Tot 1 0 0 1 \$6,000
25 YR 2 1 1 0 \$177,200 25 Tot 15 8 1 1 \$215,865
24 YR 0 0 0 0 -Life 61 18 8 8 \$292,487

4 ALWAYS BUSTNING N

61:49.3 (5/8) Q \$6,000

b m 7, by Always B Miki, Simply Stunning by Art Major

Richard Pollicucci, South Easton, MA

Last 5 Sts-\$43,500

1:55.4 YR

*1:49.3 PrC 5/8

26 YR 1 0 0 1 \$6,000 26 Tot 1 0 0 1 \$6,000
25 YR 2 1 1 0 \$177,200 25 Tot 15 8 1 1 \$215,865
24 YR 0 0 0 0 -Life 61 18 8 8 \$292,487

3-1 Ti. Tetrick 1-0-0-1 (000)

G. Athearn 1-0-0-1 (000)

27 Mar 26	3YR	fst45 ⁵⁰	28	:57	1:26	1:54	UM #1	50000	6	6 ³	6 ⁹	6 ⁴	6 ⁴	3 ¹	1	TiTetrick	GrAthearn	292	30	273	279	1:54	90	-1.4w	L.10.38 TokAlChBtmBmbAlwysBstn	3rd,ov,land,ov,pace-6
13 Mar 26	2YR	fst40 ⁵⁰	30	:59	1:28	1:54	Qua	3	2 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1	JoStratt	GrAthearn	301	292	282	274	1:54	4		Lrln AlwysBstn Ardnl Ulyesses	-3	
25 Nov 25	8PRC	fst50 ⁵⁰																								

Boyd with a firm standing on the Meadowlands leaderboard

By Dave Little for The Meadowlands

Braxten Boyd is willing to put the work in now so that things down the road pay off in a big way.

The 26-year-old driver took the first three weeks of the year off from racing at The Meadowlands, yet, still finds himself firmly in fifth place in the driver standings there with 22 walks down victory lane.

A year ago, Boyd's 71 wins at The Meadowlands were good for fifth in the standings. Overall, he racked up 337 victories (to tie a career best) and earnings of \$5 million (a career high) on the way to being selected as the 2025 Dan Patch Rising Star Award winner.

Boyd is experiencing what many drivers in his age group do: The grind. But he's OK with it.

"The New York Sire Stakes has been really good to me the last couple of years and I am planning on doing that a lot this year," said Boyd. "Hopefully, I stumble into a horse that's good enough on that circuit that could do some Grand Circuit racing. I'm open to doing anything. You just have to hope and pray you get the opportunity."

Opportunity came knocking a year ago with the high-octane 3-year-old pacer Madden Oaks.

"Getting to taste that sweet victory in The Meadowlands Pace, and even the second-place finish in the North America Cup was something I'll never, ever forget," said Boyd. "To be in those races, what a blessing. Thank the Lord that we were able to win one of them."

The back-to-back leading pilot at Tioga Downs knew there were naysayers critical of him before The Meadowlands Pace, and he was glad to silence them.

"There were some podcasts, and they said 'Braxten has the morning-line favorite and he's got no shot,'" said Boyd. "And I thought, well, I guess we'll have to see."

At the age of 21 in 2021, Boyd won 245 races and has won at least that many every year since. He appreciates the opportunities at The Meadowlands that have come his way.

"The two biggest trainers that come to mind are Mark Silva and my (future) brother-in-law Tee Wine," said Boyd. "Since I got out here five years ago, I don't really drive for anybody that I originally came out here for, so it's really funny how everything kind of changes. Mark, Tee and Amanda Fine have been very instrumental to my success."

Boyd is chill when it comes to what lies ahead in the summer when names like Dunn, Gingras, McCarthy, Bartlett, Tetrick and Zeron start popping up on the entry sheet.

"We're just kind of going to let it play out," said Boyd. "I'm still getting some opportunities here and there. I just want to put my name out there in case they ever need me. The high-level trainers have a lot of power behind them and sometimes being fourth or fifth on their list is just fine."

"I've been blessed enough to drive some for Marcus Melander on the New York Sire Stakes circuit the last couple of years. I might be fifth or sixth or seventh on the totem pole, but I do everything I can to get lucky and get one of their horses that you can do well with in the future."

Thus, even after winning six times at The Big M last weekend, Boyd will once again drive primarily at Tioga once the warm weather hits.

"If somebody's looking for a driver at Tioga, it doesn't hurt that people know that I'm there a lot," said Boyd.

But he still dreams of making The Meadowlands his year-round home base.

"Driving in The Meadowlands Pace and North America Cup, those are some of the most fun moments in my life, and, hopefully, we get to do it again. Still, sometimes it's better to place yourself in a spot where you might get more work than getting the more powerful horses."

For someone who will likely have thousands of drives over the next several decades, Boyd has an eye on the end of the road for both himself, and his fiancé, Brandy, who currently trains a few horses.

"(In five years) Hopefully, I'm at The Meadowlands and Pocono and living closer to The Meadowlands. Hopefully, we have a casino there and race more days at The Meadowlands, too. And I can retire early."

NEW POST TIME: Beginning this Friday (April 3), The Meadowlands will move its post time to 6:35 pm. With the exception of July 4 (6 p.m.) and August 8 (noon), all live harness racing programs at The Meadowlands will begin at 6:35 p.m. for the remainder of 2026.

DRF 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, APRIL 2

RACE 8

(7) OURMATEMENKO N drew outside again but drops out of the NW7500L5 base class and I'll look for him to take advantage of the class relief.

-Greg Reinhart



FRIDAY, APRIL 3

RACE 9

(1) TELLS ON A ROLL majorly hinted at a return to form two starts ago, but was mired towards the back in last week's Open and couldn't get a check. I think she looms large on the drop back down.

-Kevin Plowcha



RACE 8

Returning from a few weeks away and making just her second start of the year, (7) SAMMY JO HANOVER put in a huge mile to miss by a neck after being used hard through a 54 4/5 half. Anything close to that mile would make her tough here.

-Derick Gwerner



SATURDAY, APRIL 4

RACE 8

(2) SEASIDEESCAPE was a nice winner here in early March and can't be faulted for his effort at Yonkers last time. The 1:49 2/5 mile at Scioto tells you there could be even more in the tank.

-Gwerner



FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis

Friday

Meadowlands Analysis

Friday Saturday

Yonkers Analysis

Thursday Friday

DHP PPS

HARNESS EYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

INSTANT RACING UPDATES VIA TWITTER: @DRFHARNES

NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

JOHN BRENNAN TROTTING SERIES GETS UNDERWAY

The 2026 edition of the John Brennan Trotting Series commenced on Wednesday night (April 1) at MGM Yonkers Raceway with a pair of \$30,000 divisions, and the victories went to Top Gun Hanover and Always A Story.

The John Brennan Trotting Series is named in honor of the longtime Standardbred Owners Association of New York horsemen's representative who passed away from complications of COVID-19 in March 2020.

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BARTLETT TRIPLES TO BEGIN MGM BORGATA PACING SERIES

Driver Jason Bartlett won three of the five \$50,000 divisions of the first round of the MGM Borgata Pacing Series on Monday night (March 30) at MGM Yonkers Raceway with Soho Firestone A, Redwood Hanover and Huntinthelastdolar. Donegal Luther N and Chase H Hanover won the remaining splits.

Soho Firestone A sat the pocket behind Always A Thrill (Matt Kakaley) through fractions of 27, 55 2/5 and 1:23 in the first flight and then rallied up the inside in the lane to defeat a second-over Aye Aye Captain N (Brent Holland) by a nose in 1:51 2/5. Sherlock N (Jim Morrill Jr.) was game from first-over and was third, just a neck behind the top two.

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SCHEDULES ANNOUNCED FOR 2026 NEW YORK SIRE STAKES AND MORE

The Agriculture & New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund is pleased to announce the release of the 2026 New York Sire Stakes, Excelsior Series, and County Fair racing program schedules for the upcoming season.

The 2026 schedules highlight another exciting year of racing for New York-bred Standardbreds, with competitive opportunities for 2- and 3-year-old colt and filly pacers and trotters at racetracks and county fair venues across New York State. Full schedules and racing information are now available on the New York Sire Stakes website at www.nysirestakes.com/racing/.

"The release of the 2026 racing schedules marks the beginning of another exciting season for New York's harness racing community," said Fletcher Whyland, Executive Director of the Agriculture & New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund. "These schedules reflect the continued strength of our state-bred racing program and provide owners, breeders, trainers, and fans with outstanding opportunities to compete and celebrate the success of New York-bred Standardbreds throughout the season."

New York Sire Stakes

The 2026 New York Sire Stakes season will feature premier races for 2- and 3-year-old colt and filly pacers and trotters at racetracks throughout New York State, culminating with the annual Night of Champions later in the season.

Excelsior Series

The 2026 Excelsior Series will once again provide additional opportunities for New York-bred horses to compete throughout the racing season, featuring 2- and 3-year-old colt and filly pace and trot divisions across New York State.

County Fair Series

The 2026 County Fair Series remains an important part of New York's harness racing tradition, showcasing the sport at county fair tracks across the state and continuing to provide valuable racing opportunities in a community-centered setting.

The New York Sire Stakes is the state's premier harness racing program for 2- and 3-year-old Standardbreds. Established to encourage the breeding, buying, and racing of Standardbred horses in New York State, it is the nation's oldest harness racing program of its kind and has served as a model for state-bred racing programs.

To learn more and view the complete 2026 race schedules, visit the New York Sire Stakes website at <http://www.nysirestakes.com/racing/>.

[-release \(NY Sire Stakes\)](#)

BETTORS CONTINUE TO SHOW FOR OAK GROVE IN MEET'S SECOND WEEK

Oak Grove Racing, Gaming & Hotel exited the second week of the 2026 harness racing meet riding on strong momentum as gamblers churned through the betting windows to propel the southern Kentucky racetrack to more year-over-year gains.

Racing on Monday (March 30) and Tuesday (March 31) both bested betting numbers from the second week of the 2025 meet. Monday's card finished with a 7.2 percent gain in betting from the same number of races run while Tuesday's card had an 8.1 percent beat with just one more race contested. Together, the second week of the 2026 meet bested the second week of the 2025 meet by 7.7 percent. Strong betting in the second week has Oak Grove already ahead of overall handle heading into week three year over year by 3.1 percent.

With pools growing in 2026 at Oak Grove, bettors also continued to get rewarded by the new player-friendly \$1 Pick 4, which had its take-out reduced to just 15 percent for the meet. The Pick 4 pool saw just over 30 percent more money bet on the Monday card year over year and 26.7 percent more money bet year over year on the Tuesday card. A formful sequence on the Monday card with winners of 4/5, 8/5, 2-1 and 2-1 odds returned \$126.47, nearly 50 percent more than a dollar parlay. Tuesday's sequence with winners of 7/2, 1-1, 1-1 and 7-1 odds paid a plump \$697.44, over three times more than the dollar parlay.

Favorites took a wallop on Monday after a logical opening day with just four chalks finding the winner's circle from 12 races. Another even performance by favorites on Tuesday helped bring the average win payoff through 25 races to about 4-1 compared to an average win payoff of 3-1 in opening week. The track also continued to show no positional advantages with speed types and closers winning at an even clip.

Top driving honors for the week at Oak Grove split four ways with Ronnie Wrenn Jr., Atlee Bender, Brandon Bates and Kyle Wilfong each winning three races during the week. Jay Hochstetler led all trainers with his hat trick on Tuesday that included a win in the \$30,000 featured Open Handicap Trot with Ponda Jet. Ron Burke, Justin Lloyd, Randy Crisler and Stephan Halford II each doubled during the week.

Ronnie Wrenn Jr. still holds the lead atop the driver standings with nine victories through the meet from 24 drives. Brandon Bates sits second with seven wins followed by Atlee Bender with three wins and Kyle Wilfong with three wins. Ron Burke leads all trainers in wins heading into the third week of the meet with five visits to the winner's circle followed by Randy Crisler with three wins, Walter Haynes Jr. with three wins and Jay Hochstetler also with three wins.

JK's Shining Star became the first horse of the 2026 meet to win back-to-back weeks at Oak Grove. After romping in an amateur driving race on opening day, she overcame a wide draw to win another amateur driving race and also became the first horse of the meet to win out of post 9 now that the draw starts on the gate versus meets past where post 9 started from the second tier. Two other horses, Stephan Halford II trainee Dreaminofbnawnr and Richard Lindsay pupil Just Chasing Tails, also scored back-to-back wins in the first two weeks of the meet.

The 2026 season of harness racing at Oak Grove continues on a Monday-Tuesday rotation through July 14 with a single exception for the inaugural running of the \$500,000 Oak Grove Trotting Derby, which will take place on Preakness Day Saturday, May 16 and will have eliminations the week following the 2026 Kentucky Derby on Monday, May 4. First-race post time at Oak Grove is 1:10 p.m. (CDT).

[-release \(Oak Grove\)](#)

SHENANDOAH HONORS HAMMER AS 2026 SPRING MEET KICKS OFF

Shenandoah Downs kicks off its 11th year of pari-mutuel harness racing in Woodstock on April 11 and continues a seven-week spring season with cards every Saturday & Sunday at 1:05 PM thru May 24. A seven-week fall meet will follow from September 19 - November 1, preceded by a four-day non-wagering session at the Shenandoah County Fair September 2-5.

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