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**EDITOR'S EYE**

By Derick Giwner  
 X [@harnessevegy](https://twitter.com/harnessevegy)

While Oak Grove Racing, Gaming & Hotel officially began its harness racing journey in October 2019, the track will truly mark its place in the sport as a force on the Grand Circuit stakes scene this Saturday (May 16) when it hosts the \$500,000 G1 Oak Grove Trotting Derby and \$300,000 G1 Oak Grove Trotting Oaks. These events as well as the entire vision of Oak Grove present and future is something that has been a passion project for a man who has been waiting for the Kentucky Standardbred racing scene to revive for a long time.

"No one could tell you that they knew exactly where historical horse racing [similar to slow machines] would go in terms of the revenues it would generate. But we were cautiously optimistic that if we won the legal battles to make it available and the track partners that were interested in the open licenses were able to secure them and invest in the industry, we hoped there would be this rebirth of what we're seeing right now in Kentucky," said Ken Jackson, co-owner of Kentuckiana Farms as well as the Lexington Selected Sales Company,

and a key figure in the shaping of the Oak Grove experience. "One of the things we always had as a vision was that we would be part of a signature event, but we wanted to do it what we believed is the right way, and that is build a significant and meaningful race program. And we grew from the first year 16 days to we're now racing 37 days. We raced for \$600,000 in year one and when it's all added up between Sire Stakes, overnights and stake events, we'll be north of probably \$11 million at Oak Grove alone."

Jackson speaks passionately about Oak Grove and especially its newest stakes races. He sees them as a starting point rather than the finish line and is hoping Saturday's event will set a bar Oak Grove can continue to raise year after year through promotion and great racing.

"I never knew if I would be this energized about harness racing again in Kentucky. We've been hanging on with a lifeline for 20 plus years prior to historical horse racing," said Jackson, who was in a position to be part of the change due to his connections with the racing commission, industry leadership and ties throughout both thoroughbred and standardbred racing and breeding. "We've been able to achieve the things we've hoped for and dreamed for many years back."

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 3](#)



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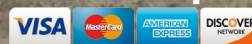
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Infused with supplemental income from casino gaming revenue, Kentucky breeding has seen a boon. Foal crops have increased exponentially from a few hundred per year to nearly 2,000, and purses have risen in kind, with the Sire Stakes finals growing from \$175,000 in 2016 to \$400,000 this year.

A number of large stables have even opened up operations locally in Kentucky to take advantage of the warmer weather and racing opportunities. Trainers Marcus Melander and Ake Svanstedt now have strings in the state and owner Greg Luther just finished work on his new facility outside of Lexington. Jackson estimated that 3,000 to 4,000 acres of land has been purchased in the Bluegrass region by out-of-state Standardbred people in the last handful of years alone.

Having a flourishing breeding program in Kentucky was vital to build a foundation for the state to take its place among the elite regions in North American harness racing, but to truly reach new heights more was necessary.

Enter the \$500,000 G1 Oak Grove Trotting Derby and \$300,000 G1 Oaks, a pair of races for 3-year-old trotters that not only fills a hole in the schedule on the road to the \$1,000,000 G1 Hambletonian and \$500,000 G1 Hambo Oaks, but more importantly lifts Kentucky's profile in the sport with a marquee event for sophomore trotters now at the start and near the end (Kentucky Futurity and Filly Futurity at Red Mile in October) of the year.

"That's a combination of my vision and Churchill's vision, but I believe horse racing as a whole needs to do more major events and maybe not race as often. I know that probably won't be a popular opinion among maybe some trainers and drivers and others, but I think you have to have a blend and you've got to draw people by having signature events," said Jackson about the reason the Oak Grove Derby and Oaks were created. "I also believe that if signature events are done properly and involve influencers within the industry, and that's every aspect of it – whether it's an owner, a trainer, a driver, a breeder, a fan, press, and they have fun at it – then all of a sudden you've built massive ambassadors for your vision. And the great thing about this project is that virtually every person I've reached out to that I believe could add value in some way has been willing to share that vision with us and try to support that vision."

Both the Derby and Oaks have brought new concepts to the stakes landscape in terms of how horses gain eligibility and the way the races are drawn. The races have created somewhat of a regional championship for the previous year's 2-year-olds by inviting and paying the nominating fees for most of the Sire Stakes champions (\$250,000-plus finals) as well as winners of the sport's Grade One races. That creates great value to owners and trainers who can avoid thousands in nominating payments yet still compete for hundreds of thousands of dollars. Oak Grove even waived the \$500 starting fee for horses competing in the consolations as a thank you to the 101 horses that nominated to the two races.

Which leads to the question, should tracks or horseman organizations foot more of the bill for big-money events?

"If financially they were in a position to be able to do so," said Jackson. "I would love to have the opportunity to fully analyze our staking system in its current format. I've looked at it, but I haven't spent the number of hours it's going to take to see, are we doing it the right way? I'm not saying that we're not doing it the right way, but I always like to challenge myself to see if we can do things better that could be make things more affordable for the masses but also generate more revenue for the sponsors, meaning the racetracks, and also increase the participation for the for the trainers, the owners and the horses."

While offering the opportunity to race for \$300,000 or \$500,000 is one thing, it still required many industry participants to change their mindset for how to prepare for the biggest races. The previous season for the elite 3-year-old trotters began around the first half of May with qualifying races perhaps followed by Sire Stakes before the Grand Circuit kicked into high gear in mid-June. Could there be a world where – like thoroughbred racing – the racing season for our best horses starts earlier and lasts longer?

"One of the biggest drivers of everything we've done with this event is try to leverage thoroughbred racing in the time of the year where more eyeballs are on thoroughbred racing from around the world and see if we can put eyeballs on harness racing in and around the same time," said Jackson. "Churchill believes we can. I believe we can. And our team at Oak Grove believes we can."

Another way Oak Grove took a novel approach was by electing to do a completely open draw when setting the eliminations and the finals of their signature races. Rather than separating horses trained or owned by the same person into different eliminations, they let luck decide the fate of all

entrants. While a number of tracks utilize an open draw for stakes, many give elimination winners an advantage in the form of an inside post.

"I just feel – along with other people that I rely on to bounce ideas off – that the fairest way to compete in horse racing is through an open draw. And so when the vision of the race was established, we also took it all the way down to the smallest levels of things like that and felt like everybody that wanted to nominate in and then actually entered should have a chance to race based upon the where the chips fall and not have historical practices interfere with that in forms of separating trainers and then separating owners.

"The open draw is the clearest path to a great race," continued Jackson. "We wanted to respect traditions where they made sense but not stick with them just because they were traditional in a process. And I don't believe favoring or giving preferences to certain horses based on prior performances is one that adds for the best final product. And I guess if you take the thoroughbred reference and follow their road to the Derby, points are awarded and those points get you in the Derby, but they don't give the highest point earner the choice to pick his post position. Renegade had an incredible run to finish second to Golden Tempo [this year], but he never would've picked the one hole for the Derby if he got the choice."

For Jackson and Oak Grove, the future is a place where anything is possible. A place where handle has steadily risen through an improved simulcast feed/show and effort. A place where big events are now possible and a large crowd hopefully won't be something from decades ago. A place where you work with forward-thinking people to provide the best possible product. A place where you – in the words of Jackson – consider the input of owners, trainers, drivers, gamblers, gambling advisors, track management, fans, sponsors, and event coordinators.

To that point, when there were complaints early on from horse people about the surface at Oak Grove, management brought in experts to make the needed changes. And it doesn't stop there according to Marcus Melander, who has one Oaks finalist and a pair in the Trotting Derby. When asked about the condition of the track on the elimination card, the trainer provided criticism along with praise.

"It was a little bit hard in the beginning of the day, but the guys who are there working on the track and the management, they're very open for everything, so if you have any opinions they want to learn and listen to us, all the horse people. So while it was a little hard at the beginning of the day, it got better and better throughout the whole card," said Melander.

If effort and desire alone are enough to will an event to succeed then May 16 at Oak Grove, with \$1.5 million in purses on the line, will not only be an overwhelming success in the eyes of the participants but also the entire industry. The sky is the limit for Oak Grove at the moment and Jackson and the Oak Grove team wouldn't have it any other way.

## ***Twin B Joe Fresh, 2024 Horse of the Year, returns to the races in Friday qualifier***

It has been nearly seven long months since Twin B Joe Fresh was forced to scratch out of the Breeders Crown Open Mares Pace at Woodbine Mohawk Park due to a hairline fracture of her left cannon bone. Following surgery and recovery, the 2024 Dan Patch Horse of the Year winner with a bankroll north of \$2.8 million is finally back.

Twin B Joe Fresh is scheduled to start in the sixth and final qualifier late Friday afternoon (5/15) at The Meadowlands and her trainer says she is ready to roll.

"She feels like her old self," said Chris Ryder, who has trained her in a jog cart thus far in about 2:05. "I think she is ready to rumble. We'll give her a run at The Meadowlands and blow her out but I don't think she has lost anything."

Ryder wasn't ready to commit to a firm schedule but said she would likely qualify twice and aim for the Roses Are Red at Woodbine Mohawk Park, which has eliminations on June 6 and a final the following Saturday.

The trainer will also have Miki And Minnie in that stakes event. She will make her third qualifying start in the fifth race on Friday because the Hall of Famer has been unable to find her a pari-mutuel race.

"She's fine," said Ryder on Miki And Minnie, who will start next in the Besty Ross at Harrah's Philadelphia. "I might let her run a bit and stretch her out on Friday."

**-by Derick Gwerner**

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Joseph Kyle photo

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# Endurance is built to win the \$500K Oak Grove Trotting Derby



## JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman ✕ [Bergmanjay](#)

It's hard to turn down an opportunity to race for \$500,000 without having to reach into your own pocket. The first Oak Grove Trotting Derby, an attempt to draw in the top sophomore colts and geldings in early May, came with caveats. While some had to nominate, others – due to their extreme prowess in 2025 – earned spots in the May 4 elimination races without an expense. Saturday's rich final will bring last year's Breeders Crown champion Spencer Hanover along with last year's Kentucky Championship winner Endurance as well as seven others in a contest that more than lives up to expectations, at least on paper.

For trainer Chris Beaver, that invitation led him to have Endurance, a colt by Captain Corey that missed last year's Breeders Crown due to a bruised coffin bone, ready early enough – or so he hoped – for the May 4 elimination.

"He trained down smoothly all winter," said Beaver, indicating that there were no issues with the coffin bone and a filled-out version of Endurance had come back on schedule. "When Andy (McCarthy) came down to qualify him we were shooting for around 1:54-1:55."

McCarthy guided Endurance to a 1:53 4/5 mile on April 16 over the Spring Garden Ranch mile track and the trainer figured that was enough of a prep and wouldn't require a second qualifier in advance of the Oak Grove Trotting Derby trials.

"I really didn't know what to expect in that first race," said Beaver of the 1:51 3/5 and fastest of three \$50,000 elimination races. "Andy said he didn't know what would happen when he pulled him but once he did, he was all business."

Endurance had sat patiently in third through a 56 opening half mile and then pulled as the pace picked up. Ohio sensation Big Ranger threw down a 27 flat third quarter as McCarthy put Endurance in motion on the backstretch. Endurance had no issues with taking air or the accelerated pace and drove past the leader with ease, trotting a 28 1/5 final quarter and winning for the seventh time in nine career starts. That the mile time was the fastest of his career clearly projects an upward trend.

For Beaver the race answered many questions, at least about rust, but certainly not about Endurance's ability. "We only made one change since last year and that's to an open bridle," said Beaver, who feels Endurance is a fighter and that it's best if he can see what he's up against.

Endurance was defeated only twice as a freshman, once at Oak Grove in a Sire Stakes race with Andy McCarthy getting acquainted with the colt for the first time and then finishing second in the Mohawk Million behind division champion Apex. Looking back on the Mohawk Million, Beaver thought things could have worked out differently.

"He got used pretty hard to get the lead," Beaver said. "And then I think he didn't see the other horse coming quickly enough."

It was still a solid effort by Endurance regardless, as he followed up his Sire Stakes championship victory on September 14 at The Red Mile with the Million six days later and a decent ship north.

Endurance appears to have the manners and speed that make for champions and the Oak Grove Trotting Derby will certainly be a good first test with a solid field assembled but none that have raced as well over the five-eighths surface. "He's the track record holder here at 2 and 3," said Beaver proudly. "I think that race will definitely benefit him going forward."

The Trotting Derby will be the final of 11 carded at Oak Grove on Saturday afternoon and Endurance drew post six in the open draw and was made the second choice in the morning line behind Spencer Hanover (post 1), a horse that won his elimination against a much softer division in a pedestrian 1:53 4/5 mile.

"The draw was ok," said Beaver. "I'm concerned that (Marcus) Melander's two drew posts one and two."

In addition to Breeders Crown champion Spencer Hanover, Melander also has Nix Nacken who finished third behind Endurance in his elimi-



TONY CENTONZE

**Endurance captured his Oak Grove Trotting Derby elimination in a speedy 1:51 3/5 on May 4.**

nation race. The trainer called Spencer Hanover's elimination mile a "nice experience" that he can build off while Nix Nacken was a late addition to the field.

"We didn't plan to bring him to Oak Grove, but then he qualified very well at The Meadowlands and I just figured, give it a shot. I think he'll move forward a lot with that race under his belt, because he only had that one qualifier," said Melander.

Silverstein, third in last year's Mohawk Million, made his season's debut a winning one in the other Trotting Derby elimination race for trainer Matthew Burkholder. The gelded son of Chapter Seven loses driver David Miller, who sustained an injury in a racing accident at Scioto Downs, and Scott Zeron will guide him from post nine on Saturday. Burkholder also sends out Requiem (post 5), a consistent colt that has finished on the board in 10 of his 11 career starts.

"I think maybe they'll both be a little tighter, but they'll have to be," said Burkholder.

AI (post 3) was a solid second-place finisher behind Endurance in his trial and that came after getting stuck behind a weakening pacesetter turning into the homestretch. The Ron Burke-trained colt was a star on the New York Sire Stakes circuit's smaller tracks and that should give him the experience necessary to navigate this three-turn oval.

Endurance will remain in Ohio until Thursday and then ship in to be ready for detention. "He's a very good shipper," said Beaver. "We came two days before the elimination and we'll do the same for the final."

Beaver plucked Endurance for just \$14,000, making him the least expensive of the colts that sold in the Trotting Derby field. "When you pay \$14,000 you're hoping for something like this but more often than not you don't get it," said Beaver. "I've had a lot of nice horses but he's the best horse I've ever had."

Many trainers bypassed the Oak Grove Trotting Derby due to its proximity on the schedule and the concern that it may be difficult to have a horse sharp in May and then again be at their best for the Hambletonian on August 8.

"You won't be seeing much of him for a while after this race," said Beaver. "I don't want him to have too many starts."

Endurance will likely not return until the Currier & Ives on June 26 at The Meadows and then on to the Del Miller Memorial at The Meadowlands on July 11, the final preliminary race prior to the Hambletonian eliminations on August 1.

Already with \$582,450 banked predominantly from an outstanding 2-year-old season, Endurance has the look and pedigree that could help achieve greatness this year. He's from the first crop of 2021 Hambletonian winner Captain Corey and out of the dam Love Session, who happens to be a half-sister to three horses that earned more than \$700K. One of the three was the \$796K winner Triumphant Caviar, a horse that finished second to Muscle Hill in the 2009 Hambletonian eliminations but couldn't get near him in the record-setting 1:50 1/5 final a week later. Beaver trained Triumphant Caviar and 17 years later may have a horse that has the stamina for the sport's biggest prize.

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# Greg Luther's prolific game plan for Harness Racing's future



## CONFESSIONS

By Keith Gisser

Merriam-Webster defines "prolific" as marked by abundant inventiveness or productivity or producing young or fruit especially freely. With over 240 horses, including 50 broodmares, for Greg Luther's Prolific Equine, both definitions apply.

Luther, whose Real Estate Sales & Marketing Expert Facebook page has 93,000 followers, while his YouTube channel has nearly 75,000 subscribers, has plunged "all-in" to the harness racing industry over the past several years – you may have noticed his mare Tarapasta won the \$456,000 Ursula McIntyre Final at Yonkers last week – and he recently made his biggest commitment of all.

After being unable to close a deal (one of the few he has ever not completed) to buy the Winners Circle Training Center, south of Columbus, where his brother Todd trained his 75 head, he decided to start from scratch in Paris, Kentucky, about half-an-hour northeast of Lexington.

Okay, he didn't exactly start from scratch. He already had about 60 acres which housed his broodmares, and he purchased another 100 acres to create Legacy Farm. It was an old Thoroughbred farm, so infrastructure was there, but there was no training track.

"I'm an Ohio boy. The move to Kentucky was tough. It will just be my own horses, including mares and babies. With what I was paying in stall fees, I figured I might as well own my own place. I think I paid over \$3 million to Winners Circle," said Luther.

The space had its challenges, though. The farm had a huge hill and major excavators and track constructors said it would cost \$2-2.5 million to level things. He found a local company. Instead of flattening the hill, they proposed digging the top out and placing it at the bottom to fill in the low space. "We knew we would hit rock eventually, but we hit rock just five feet down. So the track, which meets USTA standards, stands level on top of what's left of the hill. You can see for 10 miles on a clear day," said Luther.

You can view video of the track's construction at <https://www.facebook.com/prolificeq>

Luther initially chose Kentucky for his breeding operation because of the state's dual-eligibility rule. "I have two stallions – Catch The Fire and Captain Kirk – standing in Ohio, and now we can meet both the Kentucky and Ohio rules," he explained. "Building the training center nearby was a logical choice.

"Like most people, I started small on the breeding side – one or two mares. Then, we bought Catch The Fire and some mares to breed to him. Then we got Captain Kirk and we bought 15-20 more mares. I breed to some other pacing stallions – both of mine are by Captaintreacherous, so that means nothing in the Somebeachsomewehre line. I have to go outside, I have 15-18 being bred to outside stallions and also have a few trotters. As I said, currently it is just my horses, but a lot of people like to come down for KY eligibility, so we will see how it goes. I want to keep upgrading both locations and my horses - I don't have partners. On the

breeding side I want to sell two mares and buy one that is twice as good. My dream is to win the Little Brown Jug, and last year I saw a homebred win the Jug for the Burke Brigade. Think about it. I could have bought every yearling at every sale and still not won the Jug."

Luther said he's learned some lessons over the years, including what the market values versus what works best for his operation.

"I've learned there is a difference between a good racehorse and a good broodmare. Lucy's Pearl was an okay racehorse, but is a great broodmare, with Lou's Pearlman and My Girl EJ. And she is about knee-high. A lot of what you want in a commercial operation is not what I necessarily want to do. We will do what we need to do make champions, rather than what it takes to get a \$200,000 sale," said Luther, who is very high on Lucy's Pearl's current 2-year-old named Lounado. "He has a white mark on his head, so that's where he got the name. I also have two really nice 2-year-old trotting fillies – an In Range named Kiss Me If You Can, who we paid \$180,000 for, and a Tactical Landing – Trifecta Station – I didn't give a lot for her but she might be the best we ever had."

Greg's brother Todd trains his horses and although they sometimes have different viewpoints, they usually come to a solid understanding. "Someone in the barn will tell Todd 'Greg's not gonna like that,' or they will tell me 'Todd's not gonna like that,' but we work it out," said Luther.

For me, the most interesting part of our discussion had to do with

Luther's use of social media and his avid promotion of the sport. He is an expert at it on the real estate coaching side, and now he is applying that expertise to his racing enterprise. Over the last couple months, his Facebook page, which has ballooned to 16,000 followers, has had regular video updates on the track construction, on the horses, and even on the stall doors. His plan is for the farm and training center to be open to the public (although the Facebook page says "Not open for tours. YET).

"We have to promote this sport and this is

how I want to do it. I don't have partners so I can do what I want," said Luther. "When we won the Breeders Crown (with Always B Naughty in the Open Mare Pace last fall) I mentioned it on the real estate page and we got a ton of responses. Some of those folks decided to get into the sport, so I referred them to other trainers. We need to get new people in all aspects of the sport. We need grooms and trainers and Vets, you name it. Recently I got involved with a farrier's organization – we need blacksmiths too, but it's more than that."

Not only will Luther open the farm to the public, he has a unique idea to get the casual fan involved, not in racing, but in horses. He will invite families to the breeding center at night to watch mares foal! As a first-time horse dad, I find this to be a remarkable initiative. Although I got to see my colt at less than 24 hours, watching the process of foaling would have been an education.

"You might get some folks involved that way, specially young people. There's never enough help, so that could help with that," he concluded.

Luther has actually bought several homes in Paris that he is making available to his staff to rent at moderate prices.

I planned to spend 20-25 minutes talking to Greg Luther, but it was a prolific conversation, lasting just under an hour. And I feel like I have enough material to write another column about him.

That's it for this time. Now go cash. Maybe on Tarapasta's next start. See you next time!



GREG LUTHER (FACEBOOK)

Greg Luther's "track in the sky" is on a hill and provides views for miles.

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# Breeders Crown winner French Wine makes '26 debut in Cutler

By Jay Bergman

Trainer Nancy Takter sounded excited to be getting French Wine, last year's Breeders Crown Open Trot winner, back to the races.

"I'm looking forward to Saturday night," Takter said. "He qualified well both times and I couldn't be happier with him."

The 6-year-old by Bar Hopping will meet eight others including last year's Trotter of the Year Lexus Kody in the \$150,100 Grade 3 Arthur J. Cutler Memorial at The Meadowlands.

French Wine moved into Takter's stable last August and was already an established elite trotter. "Andy and Julie Miller did a great job with him," Takter said. "The horse was a solid competitor with Tactical Approach as a 3-year-old for them."

Indeed, French Wine was an established commodity before leaving the Millers, now Takter, in her first full season as conditioner of the horse, will hopefully continue what was seen last fall on a more consistent basis.

"After I got him we changed the shoes," said Takter, explaining some of the reason for the revival of French Wine that started with third-place finishes in the Caesars Trotting Classic at Hoosier Park and the Allerage at The Red Mile. The improvement continued with a second-place finish behind Lexus Kody in the Breeders Crown eliminations at Woodbine Mohawk Park, followed a week later by an epic performance taking the Crown final in a 1:50 1/5 clocking.

"Most of the work we've done with him over the winter is to build up his strength," said Takter, who believes that work will help French Wine during his 6-year-old season.

French Wine landed post seven in Saturday's tenth and feature race at The Meadowlands and will have Jason Bartlett in the bike again as he was in during last year's Crown victory as well as two 2026 qualifiers at The Meadowlands.

Lexus Kody will be making his second start of the year following those morning preparatory miles and a second in his season's debut on May 2 at over this surface, losing to stablemate Antognoni S in a snappy 1:50 4/5 mile. Lexus Kody finished second behind Periculum in last year's edition of the Cutler and looks for some form of revenge with regular driver Yannick Gingras returning to the bike. Lexus Kody drew post eight.

Periculum (post 3) will be making his third straight appearance in this race for trainer Marcus Melander. A winner of \$2.1 million during his career, Periculum, now a 7-year-old, has finished first or second in 29 of his 63 lifetime starts. The son of Muscle Hill is coming off the shelf like French Wine and looked ready with his 1:51 4/5 mile trotted in a qualifier at The Meadowlands on May 8. A winner in 2025, Periculum made a break in the 2024 edition and didn't hit the board.

Melander sends out Aetos Kronos S (post 4) with the 10-year-old son of the famed Bold Eagle entering his second full season in North America. Aetos Kronos S won six of his 14 starts in 2025 and was not eligible to some key races. Dexter Dunn will guide Aetos Kronos S in the Cutler.

Logan Park brings an impressive resume to the Cutler with 45 career wins in just 104 starts. The Ontario-bred son of Archangel was a 1:52 4/5 winner in his season's debut at Woodbine Mohawk Park on April 26 for trainer Rob Fellows. Logan Park made an uncharacteristic break in stride in his final prep for the race but arrives in top hands with Tim Tetrick slated to drive.

Rounding out the Cutler field is Benjamin Hanover (post 1), Chapercraz (post 2), Hey Porter (post 5) and Security Protected (post 6).

On the Meadowlands undercard are multiple divisions of the Garden State stakes for 3-year-old trotters of both sexes. Takter is looking forward to the return of Leading Lady to action. The Walner-sired filly drew post five in Saturday's eighth race, a \$45,000 Garden State division for fillies.

"She got sick on me last year," said Takter. "She's a big, strong filly and I would say my best prospect for the Hambletonian Oaks."

Leading Lady put in two absolutely crushing qualifiers, amplifying Takter's belief in the filly that was good enough to reach last year's Kentucky Championship at The Red Mile in one of her seven seasonal starts.

Madam Cheval (post 4) goes in the \$45,000 third race Garden State division. "I'm super with her," said Takter. "She's not the biggest filly but she's very quick."

Madam Cheval is a Walner-sired filly from the great Shake It Cerry.

Gabes Luck (post 2) will race in the \$45,000 colt division carded as race nine. "He's a bit green and it might be a stretch putting him in here," said Takter. "I was happy the way he finished in his last qualifier."

Post time for the Saturday Meadowlands card is 6:35 PM (EDT).



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# Daley duo ready to go in \$300,000 Oak Grove Trotting Oaks

By Ken Weingartner

Naked And Famous is the type of horse that doesn't take a lot of work to get ready to race, but she still surprised trainer Noel Daley with her track-record-setting seasonal debut on May 4 at Oak Grove Racing & Gaming in Kentucky.

Naked And Famous won her elimination of the inaugural Oak Grove Trotting Oaks, for 3-year-old fillies, in 1:51 2/5 with Todd McCarthy in the sulky. She was 7-1/2-lengths clear of runner-up Jailbird Jog, the 2-1 favorite, as she lowered the track mark for a sophomore trotting filly by two-fifths of a second. Sent off at nearly 15-1, the daughter of Six Pack-Sleep Tight My Luv led to the first quarter in 26 4/5 and never looked back.

The top three finishers from three \$30,000 eliminations on May 4 advanced to Saturday's \$300,000 Oak Grove Trotting Oaks final. Naked And Famous will head to the race as the 5-2 morning-line favorite in a field of nine. She will leave from post 1.

"I knew she was forward, but I wasn't planning on a track record with her," said Daley, who trains Naked And Famous for owner CTC Stable. "She's a big, athletic thing and could have been ready six weeks ago. She's ready whenever you want her to be ready. She showed talent last year, but that was a real eye-opening mile."

Naked And Famous, a \$70,000 yearling purchase at the Standard-bred Horse Sale whose family includes two-time Dan Patch and O'Brien awards-winning filly Pampered Princess and O'Brien Award-winning colt Was It A Dream, won four of 12 races last year and earned \$181,950. Her victories include a \$100,000 Kentucky Sire Stakes final at Cumberland Run in early November and she finished third in the \$400,000 Kentucky Sire Stakes Championship Series final in September at Lexington's Red Mile.

"Trotting-wise, she can be a bit of a handful around the place, but she's a beautifully going big filly," Daley said. "If she's anything like she was last week, I think they're going to have trouble beating her. She drew the rail and she can leave, so Todd has got plenty of options there."

Daley will also send out Carve in Saturday's final. Carve, a daughter of Captain Corey-Alpine, finished third in the elimination won by her stablemate, Naked And Famous.

Last year, Carve won two of 10 races, but hit the board an additional seven times on her way to \$216,791 in purses. Her wins included a division of the Grade 3 International Stallion Stakes at the Red Mile in 1:52 – the second-fastest win time of the season for a freshman filly trotter – and was second in a division of the Bluegrass (G3) when she was beaten by a half-length in 1:51 4/5 by Southwind Chaska. She finished fourth in the KYSS Championship.

"She was probably the stronger of the two last year," Daley said about Carve and Naked And Famous. "She's just a different type of filly. She's built differently; she's very solid. She'll take a run or two, so I expect her to improve a lot off that (first start). Whether she's forward enough to go with (Naked And Famous) if she does the same thing again, I'm not sure. But hopefully she's in for a good year. She's a very smart filly that you can do anything with. She's nice to be around. She's a very agreeable filly."

Carve is eligible to August's Hambletonian Oaks (G1) at the Meadows; Naked And Famous is not.

"It wouldn't hurt to have Naked eligible to the Oaks as well, but there are a lot of options these days if a horse is Kentucky eligible and somewhere else," Daley said, referring to Naked And Famous being Kentucky and New Jersey eligible. "You just have to make sure you don't over-race them."

Carve will start the Oak Grove Trotting Oaks final from post 4 with



TONY CENTONZE

**Naked And Famous set a track record when winning the Oak Grove Trotting Oaks elimination on May 4.**

Andy McCarthy driving for lessees Patricia Stables, L.A. Express Stable, and Sjoblom Racing. She is 6-1 on the morning line.

Setyoursightshigh, who was the 2025 Dan Patch Award winner for best 2-year-old filly trotter, is the 3-1 second choice on the morning line. She finished second to Custom in her elimination, beaten by a half-length in 1:52 4/5. The Marcus Melander-trained daughter of In Range-Special Interest has never finished worse than second in 12 career starts, with seven wins. Dexter Dunn will drive the filly from post 8 for owners Heights Stable, Mantorp LLC, AMG Stable, and K Kjellgren Livs AB.

"It would be nicer drawing 4 or 5, something like that, but she can leave and it is what it is," Melander said. "It's out of our hands. I think Dexter will find some good position for her."

"I think she's the best one in there, but it's an open race. But then, you know, Noel's filly raced great in the elimination and there are some other nice fillies in the field as well."

Custom, a daughter of Walner-Goldy Mary FR is the 9-2 third choice on the morning line. She will start from post 6 with Jason Bartlett driving for trainer Per Engblom.


The remaining elimination winner, Victorianas Secret, will leave from post 3 with Ronnie Wrenn Jr. in the sulky for trainer Vernon Beachy. The daughter of Tactical Landing-Victoriana won her elim in 1:53 3/5 and is 8-1 on the morning line.

One race after the Oak Grove Trotting Oaks, the track will host the inaugural \$500,000 Oak Grove Trotting Derby, for 3-year-old colts and geldings. Spencer Hanover is the 2-1 morning-line favorite, leaving from post 1, for the driver-trainer combo of Bartlett and Melander. Endurance is the 5-2 second choice for Andy McCarthy and Chris Beaver, leaving from post 6.

Endurance won his elimination in 1:51 3/5, a track-record for sophomore male trotters. Spencer Hanover, the 2025 Breeders Crown champ, won his split in 1:53 4/5. The remaining elim was won by Matt Burkholder-trained Silverstein in 1:52 3/5. He will start from post 9 and is 8-1.

The Oak Grove Trotting Oaks is race 10, with a 4:52 p.m. (CDT) post time. The Oak Grove Trotting Derby is slated for 5:23 p.m.

— Marcus Melander quotes provided by Derick Giwner




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# Four Hambo hopefuls entered in the Bunker Hill Trot at Plainridge

Plainridge Park will host the Grand Circuit once again on Saturday (May 16) when a field of eight will line up behind the gate for the G3 \$100,000 Battle of Bunker Hill Trot. Half of that field comprises four colts with aspirations of starting in the \$1 million Hambletonian on August 8 at The Meadowlands, and the connections of them all hope early success here can propel them toward that goal.

Midwind Chimp (Gimpanzee-Boccone Dolce) spent his freshman season racing in Kentucky where he scored one win and four seconds in seven starts. Although his lifetime mark was 1:56 4/5, he was also race timed in 1:52 1/5 in his second-to-last race of the season in the Bluegrass stake at The Red Mile.

This year, he qualified back at The Meadowlands in a winning 1:57 2/5 effort and then finished sixth, beaten only 2-1/2 lengths, in the \$157,000 Dexter Cup at The Big M while trotting in 1:53 3/5, home in 27 3/5.

Midwind Chimp will start from post one for trainer Marcus Melander with Mattias Melander in the bike.

Who's Eyes Blues (Chapter Seven-Behindblueeyes) saw the most action of any horse in this field last year and posted earnings of \$181,850 as a result. He had two wins in his 15 starts, both coming in succession last July in the Kindergarten at The Meadowlands and in a New York Sire Stake event at Yonkers. He continued to compete in the NYSS and made the final where he made a break at the start. However he came back strong with a second-place finish to Spencer Hanover in the \$250,000 Big Apple Stake final at Vernon Downs in October.

After two qualifiers at Harrah's Philly to start this year, Who's Eyes Blues also raced in the Dexter Cup and finished third, beaten only 1-3/4 lengths and was timed identically to Midwind Chimp, in 1:53 3/5, home in 27 3/5.

Who's Eyes Blues has drawn post two and trainer Ron Burke has assigned Nick Graffam to steer.

Create Escape (Gimpanzee-Final Countdown) only had four starts last year, but he showed excellent speed in all of them. He won his first career outing in 1:57 2/5 at Mohegan Sun Pocono and three starts later after two impressive outings in Kentucky stakes, later lowered his lifetime mark to 1:54 3/5 in a 2-1/2 length jaunt in an overnight at The Meadowlands before shutting down for the season.

This year after qualifying back in 1:57 in a narrowly beaten second at The Meadowlands, Create Escape won his first start in an overnight at M1 in 1:55.

Create Escape will start from post four for trainer Ake Svanstedt, who has named Jonathan Ahle to take the lines.

Svanstedt will also start Nebbiolo (Captain Corey-Via Lattea It) in the



COURTESY TRISTAN SJOBERG

**Nebbiolo is a unique white horse that will compete in the Battle of Bunker Hill at Plainridge Park on Saturday.**

Battle, who will definitely stand out from the crowd with his beautiful white coat, listed as "pinto" in the program. Nebbiolo showed a propensity to win last year starting with his first lifetime qualifier, which was a 1:59 4/5 victory at The Meadowlands. He then fired off four in a row at Mohegan Sun Pocono and Harrah's Philly, where he took his career mark of 1:55 3/5 in a 3-1/2 length romp. His last start of 2025 was in the \$421,000 Valley Victory at M1 where he drew post nine, but still finished fourth, race-timed in 1:54 4/5 after a rough trip.

This will be Nebbiolo's first start of the year after qualifying in 1:56 3/5 almost one month ago at The Meadowlands.

Sarah Svanstedt will drive Nebbiolo in this race with a mid-pack start from post five.

Post time for the first race at Plainridge Park on Saturday will be at 4 p.m. The Battle of Bunker Hill Trot is scheduled to go off at approximately 6 p.m.

**-release (by Tim Bojarski for Plainridge Park)**

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# RACE OF THE WEEK

## 11 OAK GROVE SAT

1 Mile Trot. OAK GROVE TROTTER DERBY. COLTS AND GELDINGS, 3 YEARS OLD. \*\*IN THE EVENT OF A SCRATCH, AE HORSES (#10, #11) MAY DRAW IN AND START OUTSIDE THE MAIN BODY OF THE FIELD.\*\* Purse \$500,000

### EXACTA, TRIFECTA | \$.10 SUPERFECTA

#### 1 #SPENCER HANOVER

21:52.3 (7/8) \* \$25,000 LEX-SEL \$450,000  
b c 3, by Chapter Seven, Secret Passion by Yankee Glide  
Jeffrey S Snyder, New York, NY; Arthur S Fronti, Jersey City, NJ

Last 4 Sts - \$492,750 1:53.4 OaG 5/8  
1:52.3 VD 7/8

26 \* 1 1 0 0 \* \$25,000 26 \* 1 1 0 0 \* \$25,000  
25 OaG 0 0 0 0 - 25 Tot 13 3 4 1 \* \$649,889  
24 OaG 0 0 0 0 - Life 14 4 4 1 \* \$674,889

#### 2-1 J. Bartlett 743-229-134-91 (308)

M. Melander 27-5-8-6 (185)  
b c 3, by Muscle Hill, Nixie Volo by Yankee Glide  
Courant Inc, Delray Beach, FL

Br. - Hanover Shoe Farms Inc, PA

4 May26	60aG	fst780	28	:573	1:253	1:534	D-OGDrbyElim	50000	3	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	12 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	JaBartlett	MarMelndr	281	292	28	281	1:534	90
24 Apr26	6M+	fst630	302	:593	1:282	1:554	Qua		2	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	JaBartlett	MarMelndr	303	294	281	271	1:554	
18 Apr26	7M+	fst650	282	:581	1:272	1:543	Qua		4	4 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	4 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	JaBartlett	MarMelndr	30	29	291	273	1:554	
15 Nov25	11M+	gd490	283	:563	1:253	1:533	VlyVictry-G1	421000	8	5 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	JaBartlett	MarMelndr	29	273	29	28	1:533	84
24 Oct25	8Wbs+	fst410	284	:574	1:25	1:532	BRDRS CR-G1	700000	2	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	JaBartlett	MarMelndr	293	29	263	281	1:532	90

50000	3	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	12 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	JaBartlett	MarMelndr	281	292	28	281	1:534	90
50000	3	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	JaBartlett	MarMelndr	303	294	281	271	1:554	
421000	8	5 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	JaBartlett	MarMelndr	29	273	29	28	1:533	84
700000	2	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	JaBartlett	MarMelndr	293	29	263	281	1:532	90

#### 2 NIX NACKEN

21:52.2 (1) \$6,000 LEX-SEL \$260,000  
b g 3, by Muscle Hill, Nixie Volo by Yankee Glide  
Courant Inc, Delray Beach, FL

Last 4 Sts - \$62,770 1:52.2 Lx1

26 OaG 1 0 1 0 \$6,000 26 Tot 1 0 1 0 \$6,000  
25 OaG 0 0 0 0 - 25 Tot 11 3 2 1 \$187,186  
24 OaG 0 0 0 0 - Life 12 3 2 2 \$193,186

#### 10-1 D. Dunn 115-27-19-18 (235)

M. Melander 27-5-8-6 (185)  
b c 3, by Kentucky Farms LLC & Eddie Gran, KY  
Kentucky Farms LLC & Eddie Gran, KY

Br. - Kentucky Farms LLC & Eddie Gran, KY

4 May26	140aG	fst780	271	:56	1:23	1:513	D-OGDrbyElim	50000	3	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	DeDunn	MarMelndr	281	284	263	282	1:52	99
24 Apr26	5M+	fst630	292	:581	1:29	1:564	Qua		8	8 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	8 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	5 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	DeDunn	MarMelndr	313	293	291	271	1:543	
15 Nov25	11M+	gd490	283	:563	1:253	1:533	VlyVictry-G1	421000	1	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	DeDunn	MarMelndr	283	284	282	282	1:541	81
24 Oct25	8Wbs	fst410	284	:574	1:25	1:532	BRDRS CR-G1	700000	4	6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	6 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	MarMelndr	301	291	262	28	1:534	87
17 Oct25	4Wbs	fst500	274	:58	1:253	1:531	BRDRS CROW	250000	5	5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	MarMelndr	283	303	272	271	1:534	87

50000	3	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	DeDunn	MarMelndr	281	284	263	282	1:52	99
421000	1	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	DeDunn	MarMelndr	283	284	282	282	1:541	81
700000	4	6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	6 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	MarMelndr	301	291	262	28	1:534	87
250000	5	5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	MarMelndr	283	303	272	271	1:534	87

#### 3 #AI

31:54.3 (1) Q \$12,500 LEX-SEL \$150,000  
b c 3, by Chapter Seven, Image Of Bee by Muscle Hill  
Dark Horse Farm LLC, Vienna, VA; Weaver Brusconi, PA

Last 4 Sts - \$74,115 1:54.3 MIQ  
1:56.3 YR

26 OaG 1 0 1 0 \$12,500 26 Tot 1 0 1 0 \$12,500  
25 OaG 0 0 0 0 - 25 Tot 14 5 1 4 \$385,073  
24 OaG 0 0 0 0 - Life 15 5 2 4 \$407,573

#### 5-1 Y. Gingras 528-78-31-148

R. Burke 1435-295-228-169 (206)  
b c 3, by Steve Jones, NY  
Steve Jones, NY

Br. - Steve Jones, NY

4 May26	140aG	fst780	271	:56	1:23	1:513	D-OGDrbyElim	50000	6	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	RoBurke	273	289	271	282	1:514	100
18 Apr26	7M+	fst650	282	:581	1:272	1:543	Qua		1	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	RoBurke	282	294	291	271	1:543	
11 Apr26	3M+	fst550	311	1:001	1:281	1:57	Qua		5	5 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	4 <sup>4</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	RoBurke	321	284	273	284	1:572	
15 Nov25	11M+	gd490	283	:563	1:253	1:533	VlyVictry-G1	421000	5	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	RoBurke	283	282	284	29	1:544	79
1 Nov25	8M+	fst500	273	:563	1:253	1:533	Kndrgarten-G3	125000	7	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	6 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	RoBurke	293	28	283	273	1:534	81

50000	6	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	RoBurke	273	289	271	282	1:514	100
421000	5	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	RoBurke	283	282	284	29	1:544	79
125000	7	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	6 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	RoBurke	293	28	283	273	1:534	81

#### 4 IMPOSSIBLE BI

31:54.4 (5/8) Q \$6,750 SHS-HBG \$32,000  
b g 3, by Greenshoe, Zarina Bi It by Yankee Glide  
Ervin Miller Stable Inc, Debary, FL; Stepiestep Racing, Davenport, FL

Last 4 Sts - \$23,660 1:55.4 OaG 5/8  
2:00.1 HoP 7/8

26 OaG 2 1 0 1 \$13,500 26 Tot 2 1 0 1 \$13,500  
25 OaG 0 0 0 0 - 25 Tot 8 1 2 0 \$56,910  
24 OaG 0 0 0 0 - Life 10 2 2 1 \$70,410

#### 20-1 M. Miller 502-60-59-65 (120)

E. Miller 125-31-15-19 (248)  
b c 3, by M Biasuzzi Stable Inc, FL  
M Biasuzzi Stable Inc, FL

Br. - M Biasuzzi Stable Inc, FL

4 May26	60aG	fst780	28	:573	1:253	1:534	D-OGDrbyElim	50000	4	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	MaMiller	ErvMiller	291	291	28	303	1:57	74
28 Apr26	120aG	fst790	282	:574	1:264	1:554	KYNW2PMRL	15000	8	5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	MaMiller	ErvMiller	293	283	284	284	1:554	84
22 Apr26	5HoP	gd670	283	:58	1:273	1:56	Qua		1	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	MaMiller	ErvMiller	292	292	291	273	1:56	
15 Nov25	5HoP	fst720	292	:573	1:263	1:541	Qua		3	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	MaMiller	ErvMiller	303	281	291	271	1:551	
3 Oct25	1Lx1+	fst770	281	:573	1:26	1:53	INSS-G3	72000	1	5 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	5 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	5 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	7 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	5 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	SoZero	ErvMiller	292	291	28	272	1:54	83

50000	4	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	MaMiller	ErvMiller	291	291	28	303	1:57	74
15000	8	5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	MaMiller	ErvMiller	293	283	284	284	1:554	84
421000	1	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	MaMiller	ErvMiller	292	292	291	273	1:56	
72000	1	5 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	5 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	5 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	7 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	5 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	SoZero	ErvMiller	292	291	28	272	1:54	83

#### 5 REQUIEM

21:52.3 (1) Q \$12,500 LEX-SEL \$45,000  
b c 3, by Muscle Hill, Ostrich Blue Chip by Chapter Seven  
Dark Horse Farm LLC, Vienna, VA

Last 4 Sts - \$94,300 1:55.2 MVR 5/8Q  
1:52.3 Lx1

26 OaG 1 0 1 0 \$12,500 26 Tot 1 0 1 0 \$12,500  
25 OaG 2 0 2 2 \$9,600 25 Tot 10 4 1 4 \$143,300  
24 OaG 0 0 0 0 - Life 11 4 2 4 \$155,800

#### 10-1 R. Wrenn Jr. 683-170-123-85 (249)

M. Burkholder 34-7-11-2 (206)  
b c 3, by Schmucker & Sunset Stbs, IN, etc.  
Schmucker & Sunset Stbs, IN, etc.

Br. - Schmucker & Sunset Stbs, IN, etc.

4 May26	90aG	fst780	271	:562	1:242	1:523	D-OGDrbyElim	50000	4	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	RonWrrnJr	MaBrkhlrd	271	292	28	282	1:53	96
18 Apr26	2MVR	slv680	284	:58	1:261	1:552	Qua		9	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	DaMiller	MaBrkhlrd	284	291	281	291	1:552	
7 Apr26	3M+	fst370	301	:584	1:274	1:56	Qua		6	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	MaBrkhlrd	MaBrkhlrd	301	283	29	281	1:56	
21 Oct25	6CbR	fst650	282	:59	1:27	1:552	KySS2Yocg	40000	4	3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	DaMiller	MaBrkhlrd	291	303	28	282	1:56	
3 Oct25	1Lx1+	fst770	281	:573	1:26	1:53	INSS-G3	72000	6	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	DaMiller	MaBrkhlrd	281	292	282	27	1:53	89

50000	4	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	RonWrrnJr	MaBrkhlrd	271	292	28	282	1:53	96
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# Cutler telecast to kick off Fox Sports' Meadowlands season

Harness racing fans who don't live within driving distance of The Meadowlands can get a taste of being right there in the middle of the action this Saturday (May 16) night when the TV teams at The Big M and the New York Racing Association (NYRA) join forces for a sixth consecutive year to bring big-time Standardbred stakes into living rooms coast-to-coast on the networks of FOX Sports.

Saturday's is the first of the seven Big M-centric broadcasts during 2026, and can be seen on FOX Sports 2 (FS2) as part of NYRA's "America's Day at the Races" series.

The first show, which begins at 8 p.m. and will be three hours in duration, will feature the \$150,100 Arthur J. Cutler Memorial, an event for some of the best trotters in North America. Lexus Kody, the 2025 Dan Patch Trotter of the Year, will take on rival Periculum, the winner of the 2025 Cutler after beating "Kody" by a neck at the finish.

The Cutler is scheduled to head to the gate at 10:33 p.m.

"To have our first FOX show of the season feature the Cutler with the defending Trotter of the Year facing the horse who beat him in the same event last year is nothing short of fantastic," said Meadowlands Chief Operating Officer and General Manager Jason Settlemoir. "It's a great event for us to kick off our lucrative stakes season at The Big M, with almost all of our must-see races to be broadcast live on either FS1 or FS2."

The talent pair of Jessica Otten and Gabe Prewitt will return to provide live-on-the-scene analysis, commentary and selections on the action.

Here is the schedule for the seven shows that will feature Meadowlands stakes events on FOX Sports, with date, featured event(s), start and finish time and which network – FS1 or FS2 – the show will be broadcast on:

- May 16 – \$175,000 Arthur J. Cutler Memorial, 8-11 p.m., FS2
- July 4 – \$250,000 Graduate finals for both pacers and trotters; \$175,000 Crawford Farms; \$175,000 Dave Brower Memorial; \$150,000 Six Pack; \$150,000 Perfect Sting; \$50,000 Meadowlands Pace eliminations, 8-11 p.m., FS1
- July 11 – \$800,000 Meadowlands Pace; \$400,000 Hambletonian Maturity; \$300,000 Del Miller Memorial; \$300,000 Stanley Dancer Memorial; \$300,000 William Haughton Memorial; \$200,000 Jerry Silverman Memorial; and \$175,000 Dorothy Haughton Memorial, 8-11 p.m., FS1
- August 8 – \$1,000,000 Hambletonian; \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks; \$300,000 Cane Pace; \$300,000 John Cashman Memorial; \$275,000 Sam McKee Memorial; \$175,000 Lady Liberty; \$175,000 Dr. John Steele Memorial; and \$120,000 Shady Daisy, TBA, TBA
- September 11 – New Jersey Classic Series finals for 2- and 3-year-olds – There are four events for pacers for \$150,000 each and four events for trotters for \$250,000 each, 8-11 p.m., FS2
- October 31 – Four \$125,000 Kindergarten Series finals for 2-year-olds, 8-11 p.m., FS2
- November 14 – The Fall Final Four: Valley Victory, Goldsmith Maid, Three Diamonds and Governor's, all for a purse of \$400,000; FanDuel Championships: Two \$350,000 dashes for males and two \$175,000 events for females, 9-11 p.m., FS2

-edited release (by Dave Little for The Meadowlands)

## HARNESSRACING.COM SHOW TO FEATURE OAK GROVE TROTTERING DERBY

The HarnessRacing.com Show, presented by the Standardbred Horse Sales Company, scheduled for 12:30 p.m. (EDT; locally 11:30 a.m. CDT) on Saturday, May 16, will feature the inaugural \$500,000 Oak Grove Trotting Derby and \$300,000 Oak Grove Trotting Oaks at Oak Grove Racing and Gaming.

Hosted by Wendy Ross, the show can be seen on U.S. Trotting Association social media platforms: [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). Ross will be joined by former trainer and social media influencer Roy Dinges as co-host.

Scheduled to appear as guests are driver Jason Bartlett, trainer Chris Beaver and a track representative from Oak Grove Racing.

Bartlett will drive 2-1 morning-line favorite and 2025 Breeders Crown 2-Year-Old Colt & Gelding Trot winner Spencer Hanover for trainer Marcus Melander in the Derby and Custom for Per Engblom in the Oaks. Beaver will send out 5-2 morning-line second choice Endurance with driver Andrew McCarthy in the Derby.

The USTA would like to thank participating sponsors: the Hambletonian Society, onGait and Winbak Farm.

-release (USTA Communications)

## 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, MAY 14**

RACE 4

(1) QUALITY KID owns back-to-back wins after he held sway on the front-end last week and starts from the pole position against another beatable group tonight.

-Greg Reinhart

**EMPIRE CITY.**  
CASINO  
YONKERS RACEWAY

**FRIDAY, MAY 15**

RACE 3

(8) KISSEDBYASTRANGER makes her first foray into maiden competition after a loaded freshman campaign where she was only in stakes. Her second qualifier was sharp; I think she paces these off their feet.

-Kevin Plowcha

 **WOODBINE**  
MOHAWK PARK

RACE 11

(4) REMI LOU A took the money and uncorked a huge mile to win by open lengths last Friday. The step up in condition is irrelevant if she can reproduce that effort.

-Derick Givner

 **MEADOWLANDS**  
RACING & ENTERTAINMENT

**SATURDAY, MAY 16**

RACE 3

(3) SUGAR PACKET is back in against her own kind and could be placed on the engine as others take a more patient approach.

-Givner

 **MEADOWLANDS**  
RACING & ENTERTAINMENT

RACE 7

(5) BIG RANGER is much faster than these. He only needs to behave to destroy this field.

-Givner

 **OAK GROVE**  
RACING • GAMING • HOTEL

## FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Oak Grove Analysis

[Saturday](#)

Mohawk Park Analysis

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

Meadowlands Analysis

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

Yonkers Analysis

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

**DHP PPS**

**HARNESSEYE PPS**

**TRACKMASTER PPS**

**FREE PPS**

# NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

## BARTLETT REACHES 12,000 CAREER DRIVING WINS

Jason Bartlett became just the 11th North American driver to have 12,000 career victories after he captured the eighth race on Tuesday night (May 12) at MGM Yonkers Raceway with Heaven On High N.

[READ MORE](#)

## WIDGER REACHES 8,000 CAREER WINS

Driver Sam Widger notched win number 8,000 on Tuesday (May 12) at Eldorado Scioto Downs with Saying Grace N in 1:53 3/5.

Heading into Tuesday's card, Widger was only two wins away from hitting the milestone. He captured the first race with Born To Run AS in 1:54 for owner/trainer Mark Headworth.

[READ MORE](#)

## STAKES STAR DANDY IDEAL TURNS IN STRONG POCONO QUALIFIER

Dandy Ideal, one of the major players in the 3-year-old pacing male ranks last year, showed he was ready to start his 4-year-old season with a 1:52 2/5 victory in a Wednesday morning qualifier at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania.

[READ MORE](#)

## MISS JUM JABBER CONTINUES TO IMPRESS IN PENNSYLVANIA ALL-STARS

The Bettor's Wish filly Miss Jum Jabber continued to push her way into national consideration by notching her fifth straight victory and equaling her mark of 1:51 1/5 in one of three \$30,000 divisions of her Pennsylvania All-Stars event on Monday at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania.

[READ MORE](#)

## BRUNO NO NO NO, PRINCE HAL HANOVER TALLY IN JURAVINSKI ELIMS

Bruno No No No lowered the Canadian record on a half-mile track to 1:48 2/5 in winning the second of two C\$35,000 Charles Juravinski Memorial Cup eliminations for 4-year-old male pacers on Sunday evening at Flamboro Downs. Prince Hal Hanover captured the other elimination.

[READ MORE](#)

## MEADOWLANDS PAYMENTS FOR MAY DUE BY THE 15TH

The Meadowlands Racetrack would like to remind everyone that sustaining payments for our rich stakes program are to be postmarked by Friday, May 15th, 2026. Those races may be found [here](#).

Additionally, we would like to remind everyone that any horse nominated to any Meadowlands stakes/event must already be in the care of an approved trainer for any stake/event raced during the month of May and by May 15 for all other stakes/events. Failure to comply with any published stakes conditions may result in any agreement created by the acceptance of any stakes payment to be declared void at the discretion of The Meadowlands and may render the horse(s) in question ineligible to race in those stakes/events with no liability to The Meadowlands and no assurance of a refund of payments previously made to the stake/event in question. Current Racing Application must be on file and can be found on our website as well.

[-edited release \(Meadowlands\)](#)

## YONKERS ANNOUNCES BONUS PROGRAM FOR NEW HORSES

MGM Yonkers Raceway, in association with the Standardbred Owners Association of New York, is proud to announce a new program aimed at increasing the horse population and wagering options for its patrons while at the same time rewarding owners and trainers for supporting the best overnight program in the country in terms of purses.

Any horse which has not made a pari-mutuel start at MGM Yonkers Raceway as of May 17, 2026 will be eligible to receive a \$2,400 (\$800 per start) bonus payment if they race at least three times between May 18 and August 21 of this year. While they do not need to be consecutive, horses must make three starts during the prescribed period and be sent out by a track-approved

trainer to be eligible. The \$2,400 bonus will only be released upon completion of the third start. Stakes races are excluded from this promotion.

Should a new horse arrive at MGM Yonkers and get claimed in their initial start, the original owner will get an \$800 bonus. If a horse is claimed again in its second start, the owner who entered the horse will get the \$800 and subsequently, the new owner will get the \$800 for the third start. Additionally, if a horse is claimed in its second start, the original owner will get \$1,600 and the new owner will get \$800 after the horse races a third start.

"We are continually looking for ways to improve the racing product at Yonkers," said Racing Secretary Joe Frasure.

Anyone with questions about the new program can call the race office at (914) 457-2627.

MGM Yonkers Raceway is currently operating on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday through Saturday live racing schedule with post time at 6:45 p.m. (EDT) except on Saturdays when it is 3:30 p.m. (EDT).

[-release \(Yonkers Raceway Media\)](#)

## INDIANA STALLION STANDOUT ALWAYS A VIRGIN PASSES AT AGE 22

Always A Virgin p,3, 1:48 4/5 (\$1,135,559), the all-time leading money-winning sire in Indiana with progeny earnings of more than \$82 million, has passed away at the age of 22. After an incredible racing career, Always A Virgin went on to an equally remarkable 14-year stud career at Victory Hill Farm in Indiana, which includes four seasons at Pepper Tree Farm in Australia. In 2022, Virgin retired from stud duty and enjoyed the remainder of his life as a cherished member of the retirees at Bluestone Farm in New Jersey.

Always A Virgin's son Always B Miki p,1:46 (\$2,715,368) blazed to a 1:46 World Record performance in 2016 at the Red Mile. That record stood until 2022 and is still the second-fastest of all time. Always B Miki is currently the leading active pacing sire of Breeders Crown wins with 10. Always A Virgin and Always B Miki were both bred by Joe Hurley's Roll The Dice Stable.

Always A Virgin sired three Breeders Crown winners — Always B Miki, Colors A Virgin p,4:1:49 2/5s (\$1,070,533) and Beckham's Z Tam p,4:1:49s (\$885,056), in addition to numerous Indiana Sires Stakes champions.

Following a successful racing career in which he narrowly missed sweeping pacing's Triple Crown for owners Bluewood Stable, Val D'Or Farms, and breeder Joe Hurley's Roll The Dice Stable, Always A Virgin was retired to Victory Hill Farm in Indiana, which is owned and operated by the husband and wife team of Dr. Jeff King and Dr. Maria King. As a son of Western Ideal out of the Big Towner mare Neverhadneverwill, he brought the important Western Hanover blood to Indiana offering Indiana breeders one of the most successful male sire lines in Standardbred breeding.

"Always A Virgin was a truly great champion for his ownership group, both on the track for trainer Joe Holloway, and as a sire at Victory Hill Farm. We are so grateful to have been a part of his incredible life and career," said Mitchel Kolnick.

Trainer Joe Holloway remembers Always A Virgin as "a special horse! He was a very good and underrated racehorse, he almost pulled off the Triple Crown and all three legs would've been on a half mile – something we have not seen in quite some time. He was also an accomplished sire and a beautiful animal. He will be missed!"

[-edited release \(Always A Virgin Ownership Group\)](#)

## DESOMER PASSES AT 89

Steve Desomer, a mainstay of California harness racing as a driver/trainer for six decades, passed away this week of a heart attack.

The native of Belgium and longtime Wilton resident would have been 90 in July.

Among Desomer's top performers were his two favorites – Daisy's Bomb from early in his career and Great Irish from the 1970s – along with the "King of the Cal-Breds" Desmond and American Trotting Classic hero Dante Jay, just to name a few.

Steve retired from the racetrack in 2018 and enjoyed his time goldmining, making good use of his pilot's license and working on his tractors.

He is survived by his wife Vickie, with whom he was together for 51 years; daughter Anita, sons Tien, Bryan and Freeman and one deceased son Tino; four grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

[-by Mark Ratzky](#)