

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2026



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NIKKI SHERMAN/DRF HARNESS

Trainer/driver Trond Smedshammer was second in the 2025 Hambletonian Oaks with Walspea.



JAYWALKING

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

It's been 22 years since Trond Smedshammer captured the Hambletonian with Windsong's Legacy and the veteran trainer-driver is still more motivated than ever to return to the sport's biggest event. Now with a limited stable, Smedshammer has managed to carefully bring along his horses to the point that they are potentially good enough to compete on the biggest stage.

"It's what gets me up in the morning," said Smedshammer, describing the dream of a Hambletonian or Hambletonian Oaks winner.

What's interesting about Smedshammer's dream is that in many ways it falls in line with the Triple Crown winner Windsong's Legacy, who through his son Chapter Seven and grandson

Walner, has crafted a stallion line that is the envy of all in the standardbred business.

So it wasn't exactly by accident that Smedshammer's 14-horse ensemble managed a pair of stakes victories over the Memorial Day weekend. Last year's Hambletonian Oaks runner-up Walspea took a division of the Miss Versatility at The Meadowlands on a cold, rainy Saturday night (May 23) and then lightly-raced sophomore Sevenato provided the upset going from last to first to capture the opening leg of the New York Sire Stakes for 3-year-old colts and geldings at Vernon Downs on the Monday holiday program.

Smedshammer had been down to drive Walspea, as he had when he guided her from post eight to the top in the \$500,000 Oaks last August and led until the final stages of the race. "It was a bad night on Saturday at The Meadowlands and I've been having back issues," said Smedshammer, who notified the Big M Judges and they

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allowed him to put Yannick Gingras up to guide the 4-year-old by Walner.

“Yannick had driven her last year,” said Smedshammer.

Even with Gingras in the sulky, Walspea was dismissed at the windows, going off the fourth choice in a field of five mares and romping to a 1:53 score at the expense of Bravo Angel S, the 3-5 public choice.

Walspea had raced just once entering the Miss Versatility and was racing against older horses, but Gingras put her in a good spot and she could be in for a big season.

“In some ways she reminds me of Jiggy Jog,” said Smedshammer, quickly trying not to put Walspea in the exact category. “I’m not saying she has the speed of Jiggy Jog, only that Walspea started to figure things out more from 2 to 3 and now she seems to have put it together better from 3 to 4.”

Smedshammer felt that Jiggy Jog was good as a 2-year-old but would prove to be a better racehorse as she matured and Walspea’s maturity could help her transition to greater heights this year. In just her second start Walspea equaled her 1:53 career-best clocking in the Miss Versatility and that came over a rain-soaked surface, so troubling that some top conditioners would not race over it.

“She’s got the Graduate but I’m not taking her to Mohawk,” said Smedshammer. “She’ll stay here (The Meadowlands) for the Graduate.”

Down the line Smedshammer is hoping that Walspea’s talent could emerge, just not necessarily on the big track. “I think there are a lot of mares that may be better than her on the mile track, but I think she stands out as a horse that is extremely quick and can handle the smaller tracks,” said Smedshammer. “I’m really looking forward to racing her in the Breeders Crown at Scioto.”

Unlike Walspea, Sevenato is a work-in-progress and some of that effort began to payoff for Smedshammer and his connections on Monday when the gelded son of Chapter Seven passed four rivals to capture the initial \$58,000 Sire Stakes event at Vernon, breaking his maiden and winning in 1:54.

“He got sore on me last year and had an issue with a right knee and a splint,” said Smedshammer of Sevenato, a \$130K yearling purchase from the same immediate family as Maryland.



LISA PHOTO

Trond Smedshammer winning the 2004 Hambletonian with Windsong's Legacy.

Sevenato did show ability as a freshman and that’s why he is back this year and is a Hambletonian eligible. Whether he will become a contender or even get entered in the \$1 million race in August is up in the air, but Smedshammer wouldn’t rule out the possibility yet.

“He’s only had four starts and never gone this speed before,” said Smedshammer, who admits he doesn’t train his horses fast miles before qualifying them.

In the case of Sevenato, Monday’s victory came with trotting hobbles as the conditioner had become frustrated in the previous starts.

“He raced well in his first start at Chester,” said Smedshammer of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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second-place finish on April 16 after cutting the mile. “Then in his second start he was trying to make a break the whole second half and he finally did.”

Hoping to get Sevenato going in the right direction he was entered on May 8 at The Meadowlands. “I moved him to the outside just so I could control his speed,” said Smedshammer, not wishing to get jammed up along the inside. “The whole stretch he was looking to make a break and I had to hold on to him.”

The result was a second-place finish that would lead to the significant equipment change prior to his stakes debut.

Even with the hobbles, Smedshammer was not aggressive in the Sire Stakes and instead sat while others forced a quick pace. Sevenato knew what to do when called upon and quickly circled the field in mid-stretch.

There is still much room for improvement and some concern. “I’m not sure how he is going to do on the smaller tracks,” said Smedshammer, keenly aware that most of the New York Sire Stakes events come over half-mile tracks. “His next two races come at Tioga and then back at Vernon, so we’ll see how he responds.”

Hambletonian Oaks eligible Chant picked up a fourth-place check in the \$121,800 New York Sire Stakes at Vernon on Monday, finishing some distance behind Nezuko Kamado S and runner-up Storybook Love.

“That was a good effort for her,” Smedshammer said, “The fillies that finished first and second may be the best two fillies in the country.”

Storybook Love captured last year’s Breeders Crown and Nezuko Kamado S was third, so the trainer may very well be accurate. He’s hoping that Chant may be better suited for the smaller tracks and pick up the pieces when the others are making Grand Circuit appearances.

Smedshammer has another Oaks eligible in Green Maztake who will race for the third time this year on Friday at Harrah’s Philadelphia.

“I’m not sure what the breeder was thinking when he bred his Bold Eagle mare to Greenshoe,” said Smedshammer, half-joking and half-perplexed by the resultant filly he’s conditioning. While producing an abundance of speed is always in the calculus of a trotting breeder, both Greenshoe and Bold Eagle were considered difficult horses to control and



FOTOWON

Sevenato is Trond Smedshammer’s hope to compete in the 2026 Hambletonian at The Meadowlands on August 8.

that has led in some ways to Smedshammer’s concerns.

“The first start with her she had post seven and there was no horse to her outside,” said Smedshammer of Green Maztake, who made the front easily from the outer draw and then wired the field looking the model of composure.

“In her second start she was fighting me from the start and made a break,” said Smedshammer. “I’ve made some equipment changes, and we’ll see how she does on Friday.”

A majority of his stable are freshmen and he politely reserved comment. “Let’s talk after baby races,” Smedshammer said.

Maybe his next Hambletonian or Oaks winner is in that group.



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Bartlett heads north to drive Camluck Classic favorite

By Derick Givner

North America's second leading driver in terms of wins – Jason Bartlett – will make the trek from his New York home base to steer the 8-5 morning-line favorite in the Grade 3 C\$150,000 Camluck Classic (Race 10) at The Raceway at Western Fair. The annual event for older pacers headlines a strong Friday evening card that kicks off at 5:50 PM (EDT).

Bartlett, who is coming off a Driver of the Year campaign in the U.S., is not only second in wins with 265 (34 behind the inactive Aaron Merriman) but a clear first in win percentage at 30.2 and horse earnings at over \$4.3 million. Perhaps a deciding factor in Bartlett electing to appear in London, Ontario on Friday was picking up a catch drive on top 3-year-old pacer Brandon Blvd in the Somebeachsomewhere at Woodbine Mohawk Park since regular driver Dexter Dunn is out of town for the Elitlopp.

"It certainly worked out well to be able to come up for Friday and Saturday. Having both made the decision much easier," said Bartlett, who will miss his usual engagements at Yonkers and The Meadowlands. "There weren't any stakes races [in New York or New Jersey] this week so the timing worked out pretty well."

With Bartlett in the bike, Lou Hill stopped the timer in 1:50 winning the Invitational Handicap at Yonkers Raceway on May 18, just two-fifths off the half-mile track's fastest mile in history. Prior to that he was second behind the speedy Prince Hal Hanover in the Pacey Mindlin Memorial at Miami Valley Raceway and a back-to-back winner in the top class at Pocono Downs.

"He's just a really fast horse that is very athletic," said Bartlett. "He gets around Yonkers really well and actually went in 1:50 the other day. It surprised me with how easily he did it. He had the earplugs in. The horse is very sharp right now."

"Lou is always forwardly placed because he has such good gate speed but he's good off a helmet too," said Bartlett on potential race strategy with Lou Hill.

Lou Hill will start from post three for owner Tom Hill and trainer Per Engblom.

Just behind Bartlett with 220 wins and an almost 27% win rate this year is Ohio's Dan Noble. He'll bring New Zealand-bred Helium north on a two-race win streak at Northfield Park. The 7-year-old has raced exclusively over that half-mile surface and posted a 12-7-2-2 record in the top Open Handicap class.

Helium, who hasn't seen an inside post in over two months, was the lucky recipient of pylon position in post one for Friday's feature and was installed as the 3-1 third choice on the early line, just behind Calicojack Hanover (2-1, post eight, Bob McClure), who has won three straight Opens at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

Looking for revenge in the Camluck Classic is Brue Hanover (9-2). The David Menary trainee crossed the wire first in the 2025 edition of the race but was disqualified and placed third for a pylon violation. That ended the then 5-year-old's seven-race winning streak and driver James MacDonald is sure looking for a better end result from the difficult far outside post seven in the field of eight (post eight starts from the second tier).

Others in the field include Poseidon Seelster (post two, Trevor Henry), Chase H Hanover (post four, Tyler Borth), Donegal Luther (post five, Yannick Gingras) and Lous World (post six, Mark MacDonald). Five of the eight starters in the Camluck Classic are entering the race off a win.

Older pacing mares get their chance to shine in the eighth race C\$50,000 Forest City Pace.

Lets N Joy arrived from New Zealand late last year and has been on a tear, winning 10 of 13 starts this year, most in the Fillies and Mares Open at Woodbine Mohawk Park. She has the difficult task of winning from post seven with James MacDonald driving for trainer Jacques Dupont. The class of the field is Talk Curdy To Me for trainer Menary and driver Bartlett. She has earned over \$825K during her career and starts from the second tier in post eight.

The 13-race Friday night program at The Raceway also includes four C\$40,000 London Classic Sale Series finals, and three C\$25,000 Ontario Sires Stakes grassroots divisions for 3-year-old filly pacers. Bettors will be treated to multiple guaranteed wagers including two \$20,000 Pick 5 (Races 1-5 & 8-12) opportunities, a pair of \$10,000 Pick 4 (Races 2-5 & 9-12) pools and a \$7,500 promised Hi-5 in the finale.



**\$20,000 Guaranteed
Pick 5 Analysis
at Western Fair**

By Derick Givner

The Raceway at Western Fair presents its best card of the year on Friday (May 29). The C\$150,000 Camluck Classic anchors a strong program that also includes a pair of \$20,000 guaranteed Pick 5 wagers and \$10,000 promised Pick 4 plays. Below we'll dive into the late Pick 5 and Pick 4 beginning one race later.

RACE 8: \$50K FOREST CITY

(8) TALK CURDY TO ME starts from the tricky second tier but at least has the option of following one of the sharpest horses in the race in #1. Six-year-old was second in this race back in 2024 and seems to be coming to form in just her third start of the year. (4) GRIT N GRACE was second in this race last year and absolutely flew off the gate to get the front from post seven that night. The road to the front should be easier here and no worse than a pocket trip seems likely. (1) BLINDED BY DELIGHT shows a recent win over the track and a number of solid efforts at Mohawk. It's hard to believe that this gal came here from Cal Expo and has climbed the ranks.

RACE 9: PREFERRED TROT

(3) PASSARINO and (2) SUPERSONIC HANOVER are both going to fly off the gate in an attempt to get around the somewhat erratic pylon-sitter. They should be sitting one-two the entire mile and either has a legitimate chance at coming out on top.

RACE 10: \$150K CAMLUCK CLASSIC

(1) HELIUM N arrives from Ohio for Team Noble and you have to believe he'll be firing out from post one with everything he has. He's really not the quickest off the gate but the option certainly exists for a retake if needed. Seven-year-old has been sharp all year and I can't believe they are shipping to Ontario without designs on a win. (8) CALICOJACK HANOVER has paired together Open wins at Mohawk and certainly seems ready for this engagement. While he doesn't show success in recent lines, he's don't well on half-mile track in the past. (7) BRUE HANOVER won this event last year but was disqualified. He has the early speed to overcome the poor draw and rarely finishes worse than second for a top barn.

RACE 11: \$40K LONDON CLASSIC SALE H&G PACE FINAL

(6) SKIP THE MONEY is perfect in four starts – all over this track – this year. In leg one of the series he romped on the engine and last time he grinded on the rim and won for fun while wrapped up late. There doesn't appear to be anyone that can go with him in this field. (1) Twin B Betonit and (3) Stumbleandstagger finished one-two in the other division last week and seem like the logical underneath players.

RACE 12: PREFERRED F&M PACE

(4) JUSTINE RAY is quick off the gate and should have an opportunity to control the action in this competitive event. (1) SAULS-BROOK OLYMPIA comes off back-to-back victories at Flamboro and won both on the front but Harris really had to throw the kitchen sink at her to coax the speed out of her. I don't envision her coming away better than the pocket. (6) MACAPELO SEELSTER was looped away from the gate by the top one last time so that doesn't bode well for her chances of getting great early position. That said, she's only 4 and making just her third start of the year; room for improvement. (2) FATED FIRE is a capable off the pace commodity who needs them to mix it up to be a serious win player.

.20 Pick 5: 1,4,8 / 2,3 / 1,7,8 / 6 / 1,2,4,6 = \$14.40

.20 Pick 4: 2,3 / 1,7,8 / 6 / 1,2,4,6 = \$4.80

Menary brings stakes power to Saturday Mohawk Park events

By Jay Bergman

With four of the 11 horses entered in Saturday's C\$101,250 opening leg of the Graduate Series for 4-year-old pacers at Woodbine Mohawk Park, leading trainer Dave Menary would seem to have at least a percentage advantage. In Bruno No No No, who drew post two, Menary could have a budding star as the All Bets Off-sired stallion returns to the big track and hopes to regain winning form following a long journey and third-place finish in the Juravinski earlier this month at Flamboro.

"He took all of the air and was still right there at the wire," Menary said, commenting on the long-uncovered trip his horse had to endure.

A week earlier Bruno No No No set a new Canadian standard when he captured an elimination to the Juravinski in 1:48 2/5 around the Flamboro half mile track. "He was incredible that night," said Menary. "He was still pacing hard past the wire and into the turn."

Bruno No No No landed post two in Saturday's contest.

Two other solid efforts came from Menary's horses in the Juravinski, with Sugar Man finishing second behind race-winner Prince Hal Hanover and Fifth And Five a fourth-place finisher.

"Sugar Man is acting like a better horse than I thought he was when we got him," said Menary of the son of Papi Rob Hanover that blasted from the gate, putting horses in line in the Juravinski and inevitably working out a pocket journey.

Sugar Man drew post five in the Graduate leg.

"I was really happy with Fifth And Five," said Menary of the son of Bettor's Delight that drew into the second tier on Saturday (post 11). "He was solid on both ends of the mile," Menary said.

Rounding out Menary's quartet will be Waffle Blue Chip, who drew post 10 but will add Lasix for the first time.

Prince Hal Hanover is the likely favorite from post three in the Graduate. The son of Captaintreacherous has picked up where he left off last year for trainer Dr. Ian Moore with three wins in as many starts. Prince Hal Hanover drew post three.

The Per Engblom-trained Saba Rock returns to the big track where he's shown talent already this year with a pair of wins at The Meadowlands. Saba Rock, a sub-1:50 winner in 2026, landed the pole position.

Crack Shot (post 7) was one of Ontario's best sophomores in 2025, winning on six occasions and banking \$505K in the process. A son of Bettor's Delight, Crack Shot is already a stakes winner this year, having captured a Kentucky Sire Stakes at Oak Grove on May 4. Crack Shot landed post seven.

The Graduate Pace will go as race nine with the C\$101,250 leg for 4-year-old trotters carded as race seven. Menary will send out Hey Porter from post nine in the trotting event.

"I'm really excited to see him race on Saturday," said Menary. "He trained great this morning (Wednesday)."

Hey Porter ships north following an appearance in the Cutler Memorial at The Meadowlands on May 16. "I thought he made a good account of himself racing against the best older horses in the Cutler," said Menary,



NEW IMAGE MEDIA

Bruno No No No looks to step up in the Graduate Pace on Saturday.

expecting to see the son of Bar Hopping more at home against his own age grouping in the Graduate. Hey Porter trotted his own mile in 1:51 while chasing Periculum in the Cutler.

Trainer Ake Svanstedt has three entered in the Graduate, with the speedy Mr Mouton – a 1:50 1/5 winner as a sophomore at The Red Mile – landing post eight, Happy Jack in post 10 and Warrior from the second tier in post 11. Warrior was a winner in his 4-year-old debut and then finished a solid second behind last year's top 3-year-old Super Chapter in a qualifying mile at The Meadowlands on May 22.

Only one division was necessary for the Somebeachsomewhere, a 3-year-old stakes event and last prep race for the coming C\$1 million North America Cup. Menary will send out a pair in the C\$140,500 event carded as race five.

"They're both Ontario-sired horses and I'm glad they'll get to race without Beau Jangles in the field," said Menary. "They are both (North America) Cup eligibles, and we'll see how they race before deciding."

Menary sends out Scorpion Seelster (post 4), a son of Bulldog Hanover. "I dropped him into the Grassroots to get him away from Beau Jangles and he raced very well," said Menary of Scorpion Seelster, who is now riding a two-race win streak into the Somebeachsomewhere.

Borderline Mobby (post 8) has done better chasing Beau Jangles this year than his stablemate, finishing second to the unbeaten colt in the SBOA final on May 16 and then fourth to him in the first leg of the Ontario Sire Stakes. A gelded son of Cattlewash, Borderline Mobby has chased Beau Jangles in nine of his 14 career starts.

Breeders Crown elimination winner Brandon Blvd (post 6) will be making just his second start of the year for trainer Andrew Harris. The Downbytheseaside-sired colt captured the Paul Revere at Plainridge Park on May 2 and has since qualified back with a 1:50 3/5 mile at The Meadowlands on May 15 in preparation for the Somebeachsomewhere.

Woodbine Mohawk Park has a dozen races programmed on Saturday night with first post scheduled at 6:30 p.m. (EDT).

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Dunn, Redén eye upsets in 2026 Elitlopp at Solvalla

By Greg Reinhart

The 2026 edition of the Elitlopp will take place on Sunday at Solvalla Racecourse in Sweden, and a driver and a horse that should be very familiar to bettors and fans in North America will be among the participants.

The driver in question is multiple-time Dan Patch Award winner Dexter Dunn, who is scheduled to pilot Gio Cash from post one in the second elimination, which is Race 7 of 14 on the program. Trained by Daniel Wåjersten, Gio Cash was third in the Group 1 Finlandia-Ajo most recently, and the 7-year-old son of Victor Gio It was a boxed-in fourth as the favorite in last year's MGM Yonkers International Trot with Wåjersten driving.

"Steve Stewart called me originally. The owners got in touch with him to get ahold of me, and they said they'd like me to go drive him," remarked Dunn on how the trip came together. "It was a great phone call to get, and I'm excited to get over there."

While Dunn caught a bit of a break in the North American stakes schedule since it is not loaded with races this weekend, he will miss out on the Somebeachsomewhere Stakes and the first leg of the Graduate Series at Woodbine Mohawk Park on Saturday night. Regardless, he said that he couldn't pass on the chance to go back to the Elitlopp, where he made the final in 2023 with Stoletheshow.

"You don't want to miss good horses here, but at the same time the Elitlopp is the Elitlopp. You can't turn down opportunities like that," he said. "I'm told that the connections are pretty happy with the horse, so hopefully we can put a good show on and we'll have a good time. It's a great experience."

Dunn's docket includes six drives on Saturday and three others on Sunday, including Crown in the Group 2 Sweden Cup on Saturday and Mimosa To Martini in the Group 2 Delicious race on Sunday.

Gio Cash's competition in his elimination includes a horse we saw have a great deal of success here in 2024 - that being Dan Patch Award recipient Allegiant. Trained by Daniel Redén, the now 5-year-old daughter of Tactical Landing won both of her prep races and will be driven by Örjan Kihlström from post two.

"She has done exactly what I've wanted this year and won her races without overexerting herself. I put her through a tough workout last Monday, and she felt incredibly good then. I couldn't be more satisfied with her going into this," Redén wrote on his [Stall Zet website](#). "She also had a good workout today [May 25], and it felt like this session really hit the mark. The draw turned out well, and I believe in my horse. As for shoeing and headgear, I'll have to think it over during the week, and it will be updated closer to the weekend."

Other horses set to line up in that elimination include a pair of French invaders in defending champion Go On Boy from post five for trainer/driver Romain Derieux and Inexess Bleu from post seven for driver Alexandre Abrivard and trainer Laurent-Claude Abrivard. Inexess Bleu, while untested at the mile distance, won his last two preps in France in Group 2 races.

Speaking of France, the favorite in the [betting market](#) overall is two-time Prix d'Amerique champion Idao De Tillard (+220), who has post five for driver Clement Duvaldestin and trainer Thierry Duvaldestin in the first elimination (Race 6). Back healthy after he missed the winter meet at Vincennes and a chance to go for his third straight Prix d'Amerique crown, Idao De Tillard will look for better luck than when he tried the Elitlopp in 2024 but broke in his elimination and didn't make the final.

Elsewhere in that first elimination, Diva Ek, a fast-closing second in the 2025 MGM Yonkers International Trot and this year's Finlandia-Ajo champion, has post two for trainer/driver Alessandro Gocciadoro. Don Fanucci Zet, the 2021 Elitlopp champion and an elimination winner a year ago, got post four for Redén and driver Paul-Philippe Ploquin. Defending Swedish Horse of the Year Dream Mine will depart from post six for driver Mats E. Djuse and trainer Jörgen Westholm.

"He has looked very good in his two starts this year," wrote Redén of Don Fanucci Zet. "Unfortunately, he had to be scratched ahead of a planned start because the track surface didn't suit him, but I gave him a workout on the track last Monday and was pleased with him. He also felt very good today [May 25] when he was allowed to really stretch out. He went straighter than usual, and I was very satisfied. He'll race barefoot all around in the elimination, and, as usual, with a closed bridle."

Post time for the card on Sunday at Solvalla is 1 p.m. local or 7 a.m. (EDT), and the first Elitlopp elimination is at 3:35 p.m. local / 9:35 a.m. (EDT), while



LISA PHOTO

Allegiant won some stakes here in the U.S. but has taken her game to new heights in Sweden.

the second is at 4:02 local / 10:02 a.m. EDT. The top four finishers from each heat will advance to the same-day final at 5:45 p.m. local (11:45 a.m. EDT).

In addition to the Elitlopp, Sunday's May 31 program also includes a pair of Group 1 races for 3-year-old trotters of both sexes, a Group 2 under saddle event, the earlier-mentioned Delicious race for 4-year-old mare trotters and the Tommy Hannés race, a Group 2 for 4-year-old male trotters that contains the likes of Pennsylvania Sire Stakes champion Fashion Green and Kentucky Championship Series runner-up Mountcastle.

CLICK TO WATCH THE RACES FROM SOLVALLA LIVE (15-MIN DELAY)

Elimination #1

Post - Horse (Country) - Driver - Trainer

1. Luke The Spook (Sweden) - Adrian Kolgjini - Adrian Kolgjini
2. Diva EK (Italy) - Alessandro Gocciadoro - Alessandro Gocciadoro
3. Charron (Norway) - Magnus Teien Gundersen - Geir Vegard Gundersen
4. Don Fanucci Zet (Sweden) - Paul Philippe Ploquin - Daniel Redén
5. Idao De Tillard (France) - Clement Duvaldestin - Thierry Duvaldestin
6. Dream Mine (Sweden) - Mats E Djuse - Jörgen Westholm
7. Keep Going (France) - Mathieu Mottier - Mathieu Mottier
8. Borups Victory (Sweden) - Daniel Wåjersten - Daniel Wåjersten

Elimination #2

Post - Horse (Country) - Driver - Trainer

1. Gio Cash (The Netherlands) - Dexter Dunn - Daniel Wåjersten
2. Allegiant (Sweden) - Örjan Kihlström - Daniel Redén
3. Jabalpur (Italy) - Gabriele Gelormini - Alain Chavatte
4. Fine Manners (Finland) - Magnus A Djuse - Mattias Djuse
5. Go On Boy (France) - Romain Derieux - Romain Derieux
6. A Fair Day (Sweden) - Oscar Ginman - Elisabeth Almheden
7. Inexess Bleu (France) - Alexandre Abrivard - Laurent Claude Abrivard
8. Jobspost (Sweden) - Björn Goop - Jörgen Westholm

-John Rallis contributed to this preview



MACK LOBELL forever in my heart and on my mind



AT THE TRACK

By Darin Zoccali [X AtTheTrack7](#)

The Hambletonian has been contested at The Meadowlands since 1981 and given that we have not heard who will host the event in 2027 and beyond, I felt it appropriate to look back on one of my fondest memories as a kid at The Meadowlands, the 1987 Hambletonian.

It's hard to believe that it has been 40 years since Mack Lobell's tour de force around the East Rutherford oval. The sound of Tum Durkin's call echoing through the cavernous Meadowlands grandstand exclaiming, "it's Mack Lobell and he's pouring it on...Napoletano is never going to catch him!"

In the first heat, Mack Lobell won in 1:54, a stakes record. That stakes record only lasted until later that afternoon when Mack Lobell won the Hambletonian Final in 1:53 3/5, beating his own mark from earlier in the day.

After the performance, driver John Campbell said, "he's even better than I thought he was. He wasn't himself today, his feet were stinging him today, but he still went a tremendous race."

Campbell's point was evident after the race as Mack Lobell lost his gait the next stride after the finish line, as if he knew exactly where the wire was located.

Despite being just 4 years old at the time, Hambletonian Day is my first memory that I have at the racetrack and not just recalling it from videos. I remember my dad telling me about the horse leading up to the race, explaining how special he was and that I should root hard for him to win. We had great seats in the old Meadowlands grandstand

looking out over the magnificent oval. I don't remember much else about the day. I don't remember going into Paddock Park to see all the great things they had for children and families. I don't know anything else we did. But I remember my dad telling me about Mack Lobell and I remember watching the race. Perhaps this was the moment that hooked me into racing. I'm honestly not sure, but I remember the moment well.

Mack Lobell went on to have an incomparable career. Mack raced 94 times, winning 71 races, which by modern standings is absolutely ridiculous.

In 1986, he was the 2-year-old trotter of the year after setting multiple world records and winning the Breeders Crown.

His 3-year-old season saw him win 13 of 16 starts, including his remarkable Hambletonian triumph. He would once again win the Breeders Crown as well as set multiple world records across the many different sized racetracks that he raced over.

Mack Lobell was far from done, winning 17 of 19 starts in 1988, including the Elitlopp, the Breeders Crown and the International Trot.

Over the next two seasons, Mack won 32 of 38 starts while racing in Europe, including another triumph in the Elitlopp in 1990. I only wish there was the technology available in 1990 to follow his career once he went overseas like there is today, but the memory of watching Mack power through The Meadowlands stretch never left me and still has not nearly 40 years later.

Of course, I witnessed many history performances on Hambletonian Day over the years at The Meadowlands. There were not many I missed, and whether I was with him watching or during my years working at The Big M, my dad was there for nearly every one as well until his health began to deteriorate.

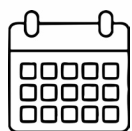
[CONTINUED ON PAGE 9](#)



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Now we are just 14 months away from Hambletonian Day in 2027 and we still do not know where the event will be held. Will it remain at The Meadowlands, head back to the Midwest to Hoosier or head north of the border to Woodbine Mohawk Park?

I have said it before, but I will say it again, so long as there is a Meadowlands to race at, that is where the Hambletonian belongs. That is not meant to be a slight against Hoosier or Mohawk, who are two of the great harness racing locations in the world and the people who work for both facilities are tremendous in their efforts. Just like when the Hambletonian left DuQuoin, I am sure there were a lot of people in the Midwest who believed that is where the Hambletonian belonged.

But there is nothing being offered (at least, not that has been reported) similar to what The Meadowlands was putting up in 1981.

In 1980, the last year at DuQuoin, the Hambletonian offered a purse of \$293,570. The Meadowlands was the new kid on the block and at the time they seemingly had a license to print money. One of the most successful racetracks in the country, The Meadowlands offered an opportunity for the Hambletonian to grow to a \$1 million purse, along with all the added incentives of the race moving to the New York City metropolitan area. In 1981, the first Hambletonian at The Meadowlands carried a purse of \$838,000 and by 1983 The Meadowlands delivered on its promise, offering a purse of \$1.08 million for the event.

Now, if someone were to extend an offer to bring the Hambletonian purse to \$3.5 Million (roughly what the \$1 million in 1983 would be worth adjusted for inflation in 2026), I would concede that is an offer too good to pass up, much like The Meadowlands offer was in 1980, but I will go out on a limb and guess nobody is offering that.

It remains to be seen where the 2027 Hambletonian is held, but on the 40th anniversary of Mack Lobell's dominance at The Meadowlands, hopefully we can celebrate that performance at the very oval it took place.

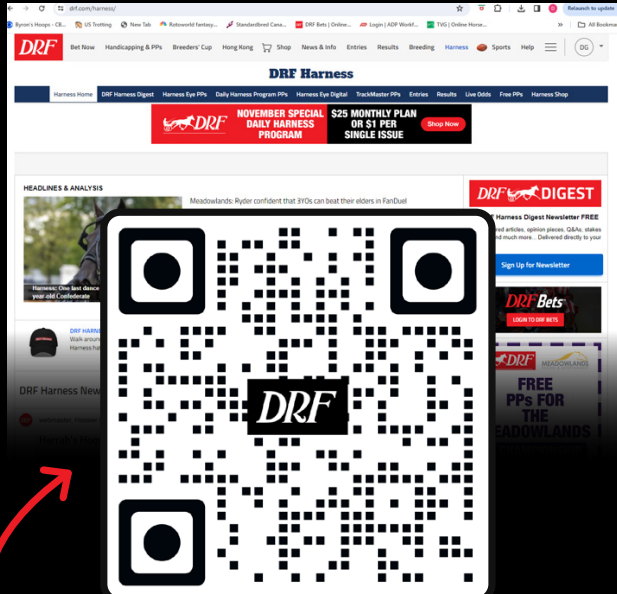


FILE PHOTO

Mack Lobell compiled 41 wins in 58 starts in North America and another 30 victories overseas.

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RACE OF THE WEEK

10 WESTERN FAIR FRI

1 Mile Pace. CAMLUCK CLASSIC INVITATIONAL PACE (G3) Purse \$150,000

EXACTA | START OF SUPERFECTA | START OF SUPER HI-5 | TRIFECTA

1 HELIUM N (L)

61:46.4 (5/8) \$9,616

b g 7, by Sky Major, Cooking With Gas by Bettor's Delight
James Morris, Chillicothe-Dennis Owens, Hamilton, Oh

Last 5 Sts -\$59,936

1:50.2 Nfd
+1:46.4 ScD 5/8

26 Lon 0 0 0 0 -26
25 Lon 0 0 0 0 +19
24 Lon 0 0 0 0 -Life

3-1 D. Noble 819-220-17-100 (269)

C. Noble 41-15-5-6 (366)

Br- T-G Casey, NZ

10 May 26	11Nfd	fst	261	:54	1:21	1:50	Opn	Hop	26712	7	5 ⁰ ₄	4 ⁰ ₂	2 ⁰ ₂	2 ¹ ₂	1 ¹ ₂	DNoble	CNoble	271	272	273	283	1:50	4	11	+8.7w	L*40	HeliumNHellabalou	BackInMyDay	-7	
3 May 26	13Nfd	fst	261	:54	1:22	1:50	Opn	Hop	27027	7	3 ⁰ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₂	1 ¹ ₂	DNoble	ChrNoble	262	28	28	281	1:50	3	11	+7.7w	L*20	HeliumNHellabalou	MasterYossiN	-9
26 Apr 26	11Nfd	fst	261	:54	1:22	1:51	Opn	Hop	26712	8	3 ⁰ ₃	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₀	2 ¹ ₁	DNoble	ChrNoble	262	273	281	294	1:52	105		+8.6w	L*30	NoToday	HeliumN Ammo	-8
19 Apr 26	11Nfd	fst	141 ⁰				Opn	Hop	19500																					-6
6 Apr 26	6Nfd	fst	261	:54	1:22	1:51	Opn	Hop	26389	6	4 ² ₄	1 ¹ ₂	1 ² ₁	1 ³ ₁	1 ⁴ ₁	1 ⁴ ₁	DNoble	ChrNoble	27	271	274	291	1:51	107		+5.5w	L*100	HeliumN Ammo	MikShanN	-6
29 Mar 26	2Nfd	fst	264	:54	1:22	1:50	Opn	Hop	26389	1	1 ² ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ² ₁	1 ² ₁	1 ² ₁	1 ³ ₁	DNoble	ChrNoble	264	28	271	282	1:50	112	+8.9w	L*30	HeliumN MikShanN	BismarckduplessisN	-5	
22 Mar 26	11Nfd	slv	273	:56	1:24	1:53	Opn	Hop	19500	6	5 ⁶ ₆	5 ⁰ ₂	4 ⁰ ₂	3 ¹ ₁	3 ¹ ₁	3 ¹ ₁	DaNoble	ChrNoble	284	282	28	284	1:54	100	-2.5w	L*05	TheReWay	BackInMYD	HeliumN	-7
15 Mar 26	6Nfd	fst	263	:55	1:23	1:51	Opn	Hop	19000	6	3 ³ ₃	2 ⁰ ₂	3 ⁰ ₃	3 ⁰ ₃	3 ⁰ ₃	3 ⁰ ₃	DaNoble	ChrNoble	272	274	28	29	1:52	107	+3.9w	L1.00	CatsSpr	TheReWay	HeliumN	-6

2 POSEIDON SEELSTER (L)

51:48.2 (7/8) \$6,859

b g 9, by Sunshine Beach, Oranose Seelster by Artistic Fella

Last 5 Sts -\$25,000

1:49.2 Wbs 7/8
1:50.1 Wbs 7/8

26 Lon 0 0 0 0 -26
25 Lon 1 0 0 0 \$7,500 25 Tot 30 3 6 5
24 Lon 1 0 0 1 -\$18,000 Life

10-1 T. Henry 824-47-27-30 (145)

Donald Lindsey, Ferous-Paul Kleinoaste, Oranville, Oh-William Alempievic, Lexington, Ky-Garth Bechtel, Meaford, On

Do. Lindsey 29-4-4-4 (138)

Br- Seelster Farms Inc, Lucan, On

23 May 26	8Wbs	gd	27	:55	1:24	1:50	Nw	28000	4cd	30000	8	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	5 ² ₃	8 ¹ ₃	BMcclore	D Lindsey	254	294	283	291	1:53	90	+2.5w	L4.55	RmbrThAlm	WrtMARS	PpsPstl	Press fh, caved-9	
16 May 26	9Wbs	fst	261	:55	1:23	1:50	Opn	Hop	40000	3	3 ¹ ₁	3 ¹ ₁	3 ³ ₁	3 ³ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	BMcclore	LindseyD	272	283	28	263	1:50	101	+7.6w	L5.55	BrueHanover	PsdnSstr	IssStrdyNght	Wide gd, try-7	
9 May 26	8Wbs	fst	263	:54	1:21	1:49	Nw	26000	4s	30000	6	4 ² ₃	5 ⁰ ₄	5 ⁰ ₄	4 ² ₁	1 ¹ ₁	BMcclore	LindseyD	271	281	263	272	1:49	109	+6.5w	L*85	PoseidonSeelster	WrtMARS	PsdnHvr	Out fh, all out-9	
2 May 26	9Wbs	fst	264	:54	1:21	1:48	Opn	Hop	40000	6	1 ⁰ ₁	6 ⁰ ₁	6 ⁰ ₇	5 ⁵ ₁	6 ³ ₁	6 ³ ₁	BMcclore	LindseyD	284	273	264	261	1:49	108	+8.9w	L12.70	Calicojack	Hanover	BmNnN	IssStrdyNght	Trail, dug-6
25 Apr 26	9Wbs	fst	261	:54	1:23	1:49	Opn	Hop	40000	4	2 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	3 ³ ₁	3 ³ ₁	3 ³ ₁	BMcclore	LindseyD	262	281	282	272	1:50	102	+8.6w	L10.15	Calicojack	Hvr	BmNnN	DblnDshr	Yld, pkt, no rally-7
11 Apr 26	9Wbs	fst	261	:53	1:21	1:48	Opn	Hop	40000	4	4 ³ ₁	4 ³ ₁	4 ⁴ ₁	4 ⁴ ₁	3 ³ ₁	6 ⁴ ₁	BMcclore	LindseyD	264	272	273	271	1:49	110	+7.5w	L11.65	BrunoNoNo	BmNnN	PsdnSstr	Chr fh, midly-10	
4 Apr 26	8Wbs	gd	264	:56	1:26	1:52	Opn	Hop	40000	10	1 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	BMcclore	LindseyD	264	294	293	254	1:52	95	-1.6w	L8.60	PsdnSstr	BmNnN	DblnDshr	Yld, pkt, on wire-10	
21 Mar 26	9Wbs	fst	261	:57	1:25	1:51	Opn	Hop	30000	4	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ² ₁	1 ⁴ ₁	1 ⁴ ₁	1 ⁴ ₁	BMcclore	LindseyD	27	30	281	26	1:51	100	+2.7w	L*105	PoseidonSeelster	JordyN	WhatchookinAt	Much the best-8	

3 LOU HILL (L)

41:49 (1) * \$17,709

b g 5, by Sweet Lou, Pretty Katherine by Rocknroll Hanover

Last 5 Sts -\$107,716

1:49.2 Pcd 5/8
1:49 M1

26 Lon 0 0 0 0 -26
25 Lon 0 0 0 0 +10
24 Lon 0 0 0 0 -25

8-5 J. Bartlett 824-265-149-110 (303)

P. Englomb 768-185-118-93 (241)

Br- Tom Hill, UK

18 May 26	7YR	fst	264	:55	1:23	1:50	Inv		53425	5	1 ⁰ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ² ₁	1 ³ ₁	1 ⁴ ₁	JBartlett	PEnglomb	264	29	273	263	1:50	114	+9.6w	L*96	LouHillShFrstnA	Jmkjrstrn		Used pst 1/4, l, handy-7		
2 May 26	14MVR	fst	263	:54	1:22	1:50	PACEY		135135	2	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	TSmith	EnglombP	263	274	28	274	1:50	108		L13.50	PrinoheAlm	Hanover	LouHill	Surrealdeal	-10
25 Apr 26	12PcDA	slv	27	:56	1:23	1:51	w	25000	0	37671	5	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	CKelly	EnglombP	27	29	273	272	1:51	105	-6.9w	L*100	LouHill	BokstrShov	ShBchStr		Down road, handy-5
18 Apr 26	10PcDA	fst	27	:55	1:22	1:50	w	25000	0	37671	7	1 ⁰ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	CKelly	EnglombP	27	284	27	273	1:50	104	+0.4w	L*100	LouHill	Copperfield	JmngcrkMn		Pkt, prs all out-7
4 Apr 26	10PcDA	fst	263	:55	1:23	1:50	w	25000	0	38194	7	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	3 ¹ ₁	3 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	SAllard	EnglombP	264	283	274	271	1:50	102	+2.7w	L*100	Backstreet	Shadow	LouHill	StringChc	Pkt, no excuse-7
23 Mar 26	4YR	fst	281	:56	1:25	1:53	Inv		47945	1	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	JBartlett	EnglombP	281	283	283	273	1:53	99	-5.7w	L*69	LouHill	Donegal	LutherN	CtprPscA	Ld, dug in, gamely-6
9 Mar 26	8YR	fst	261	:55	1:23	1:51	Inv		35000	6	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	7 ¹ ₁	TyButer	PEnglomb	271	28	282	1:52	104	+5.2w	L5.25	Whchvly	JmngcrkVrn		Bsh, lrd pst 1/4, lrd in-8		
28 Feb 26	10PcD	slv	27	:54	1:22	1:49	w	25000	0	27500	7	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	1nk	PEnglomb	27	28	271	271	1:49	107	-1.5w	L3.70	LouHill	CtprPscA	SpillMoore		Yld, pkt, all out-7

4 CHASE H HANOVER (L)

51:47.4 (5/8) \$7,652

b g 8, by Captainreacherous, Calga Hanover by Western Ideal

Last 5 Sts -\$22,869

1:52 YR
1:49.4 Pcd 5/8

26 Lon 0 0 0 0 -26
25 Lon 1 0 0 0 +27
24 Lon 0 0 0 0 -Life

9-1 T. J. Borth 679-91-94-90 (134)

C. Stratton 735-107-103-107 (146)

Br- Hanover Shoe Farms Inc, PA

23 May 26	14PcDA	slv	262	:55	1:23	1:52	Nw	13000	0	22222	6	3 ⁰ ₁	1 ⁰ ₁	1 ⁰ ₁	1 ⁰ ₁	1 ⁰ ₁	BBoyd	CStratton	264	291	274	283	1:52	103	-1.7w	L*50	ChaseHvr	BokeybellingN	BigBngBng		1,1,Trail, bad cvr, no bid-8
8 May 26	6YR	fst	293	:58	1:27	1:51	BorgC		136986	7	8 ¹ ₃	8 ¹ ₃	8 ⁰ ₇	8 ¹ ₀	8 ¹ ₀	8 ¹ ₀	ANapolitn	StrattonC	321	281	282	55	2:23	4	+5.5w	L12.70	SwBchlCtC	SprN	AYAYCptn		1,1,Trail, bad cvr, no bid-8
27 Apr 26	6YR	fst	28	:56	1:23	1:51	Borg		68493	7	7 ¹ ₂	7 ¹ ₂	7 ¹ ₂	7 ¹ ₂	7 ¹ ₂	7 ¹ ₂	ANapolitn	StrattonC	302	281	261	272	1:52	101	+6.3w	L36.55	Coaches	Corner	HwrInHth	AYAYCptn	Trail, no bid-7
20 Apr 26	5YR	fst	272	:56	1:24	1:52	Borg		68493	5	6 ⁷ ₁	6 ⁷ ₁	6 ⁴ ₁	5 ³ ₁	5 ³ ₁	5 ³ ₁	ANapolitn	StrattonC	284	292	273	273	1:52	98	+1.4w	L13.90	Mssd	BmNnN	CchsCm	DngLthN	Sat, trf, in ang, no bid-7
13 Apr 26	4YR	fst	272	:56	1:23	1:51	Borg		69444	5	5 ⁵ ₁	5 ⁰ ₄	4 ⁰ ₂	4 ^{2₁}	3 ^{2₁}	3 ^{2₁}	YGrngas	StrattonC	282	284	27	28	1:52	103	+7.6w	L10.93	RdwhHvr	SwBchl	ChshHvr		Cvr, ang ltr, no bid-5
6 Apr 26	7YR	fst	264	:55	1:23	1:52	Borg		69444	3	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	ANapolitn	StrattonC	264	283	283	291	1:53	106	+2.4w	L4.36	DngLthN	MrcCtC	ChcCtC	ChrtprA	Speed, prk, out, trd-6
30 Mar 26	7YR	fst	263	:55	1:23	1:52	BORG #1		50000	5	1 ⁰ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	ANapolitn	CoStratn	273	28	271	281	1:52	104	+4.7w	L17.39	ChshHvr	CpM	WhchHth		Used pst 1/4, l, gamely-6
14 Mar 26	10PcD	slv	27	:54	1:23	1:51	w	25000	0	27500	3	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁																		

Skladany rallies to take Big M monthly handicapping contest

By Dave Little for Meadowlands



MEADOWLANDS
John Skladany shows off his winning ticket.

It was the 15th race last Saturday (May 23) night, and John Skladany was going to go for it.

The 55-year-old Meadowlands regular, who plays in the track's \$1,000 Monthly Handicapping Contest every time it's offered, made a big bet on a horse who was risky, to say the least.

But an \$820 hit later, Skladany's wager had paid off, giving him a win in the competition.

"I've been playing the horses probably for 30 years," said the Parsippany, New Jersey native. "I've been coming to The Big M regularly since graduating high school in 1989."

The first-time winner had done his homework before his Saturday score.

"I've been close to winning a couple of times, but never was the winner until Saturday night," said Skladany.

The winning wager came on Trillion Times, a 3-1 shot who had gone off stride in each of his last three starts.

"We did notice that Jason Bartlett was interviewed earlier in the night and made it clear it might be tough to keep the horse flat," said Skladany. "But we like to go back and look at the replays and one of his races over at Pocono, he raced pretty well, even though he broke. So, I was playing him in the final race no matter what."

When asked if he thinks he's a better contest strategist or handicapper, Skladany said, "I think I'm a handicapper more than a strategist because it's easier for me to go after the guy in front of me as opposed to if I was on top. If I was on top, I would probably have blown my bankroll because I would not sit back and look to lose, I would try to win, and I would probably, you know, pick the wrong horse."

Skladany turned his \$100 into \$1,031 last Saturday, while second-place finisher James Molina finished with \$800.

For finishing in the top two, Skladany and Molina have both qualified for the \$10,000 contest final on Dec. 12. It is restricted to the top two finishers from the 11 preliminaries, meaning just 22 players will go for the big green. First prize is \$5,000.

"I'm looking forward to the \$10,000 contest a lot because I had talked to Sean (Loebs, who won the final last year), and it was funny, because we talked and I thought he had a really good shot to win it. And now that I'll be competing with him in that contest, it should be pretty interesting."

But until then, you can catch Skladany in the same place as always, in the bar area one escalator ride up from the first floor by the main entrance.

"I literally sit across the way from Sean," said Skladany. "That's exactly where I am; I sit with that crew up there."

Finishing third Saturday with a bankroll of \$648 was David Wolff, while Keith Loebs was fourth with \$556. The top four prizes were doled out on a \$500-\$250-\$150-\$100 basis.

The next edition of the monthly competition takes place on Friday, June 12.

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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 28

RACE 8

EMPIRE CITY.
CASINO
YONKERS RACEWAY

(1) TAKE ALL COMERS gets to drop out of the Invitational and also moves in from the eight-hole to the pole position. I expect he'll take advantage of that to get a win tonight.

-Greg Reinhart

FRIDAY, MAY 29

RACE 8

WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

(5) ONLYTHEGOODDIYOUNG really should be fired forward tonight in what is a pretty decent class drop. She is speedy enough to take them all the way.

-Kevin Plowcha

RACE 8

MEADOWLANDS
RACING & ENTERTAINMENT

After a number of dull efforts, (1) PALOMAR finally provided an indicator of return to form with a 27 3/5 final quarter on the end of a 1:53 mile. Anything close to his best would prove too much for this field.

-Derick Givner

SATURDAY, MAY 30

RACE 10

MEADOWLANDS
RACING & ENTERTAINMENT

(3) COURTS ON FIRE was reserved at the back last time and had plenty left at the end of the mile. Moving to the inside of the gate and making his third start of the year, all systems should be on go.

-Givner

FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis [Friday](#) [Saturday](#)

Meadowlands Analysis [Friday](#) [Saturday](#)

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

DHP PPS

HARNESS EYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

INSTANT RACING UPDATES VIA TWITTER: @DRFHARNES

NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

ODDS ON MR MAMBA IMPRESSES IN FIRST OUTING OF 2026

Indiana Sire Stakes action got underway during a spectacular 15-race Memorial Day card on Monday (May 25) at Harrah's Hoosier Park. The headline was the sophomore debut of world champion Odds On Mr Mamba, who returned with a 1:49 first-over score in the \$96,000 3-year-old colt and gelding pace with Dexter Dunn aboard.

[READ MORE](#)

BIG RANGER BREAKS TRACK RECORD IN OHIO SIRE STAKES BLOWOUT

Three-year-old trotting colt Big Ranger lowered the track record for his division to 1:51 2/5 in winning his \$75,000 Ohio Sires Stakes race on Monday evening at Eldorado Scioto Downs.

Driven by trainer Ronnie Gillespie, Big Ranger led his foes through fractions of 27 1/5, 56 and 1:24 1/5, then stepped away in a 27 1/5 final quarter to defeat Rose Run Banker (Chris Page) by 2 3/4 lengths.

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SPENCER HANOVER REIGNS IN MONDAY'S NEW YORK SIRE STAKES TILTS

Oak Grove Trotting Derby champion Spencer Hanover led a double for trainer Marcus Melander in New York Sire Stakes divisions for 3-year-old trotters on Monday afternoon at Vernon Downs.

Driven by Jason Bartlett in the second \$59,100 flight for the colts and geldings, Spencer Hanover was third at the 29 1/5 quarter, then came to the outside in the backstretch and took the lead away from Seven Grand (Ake Svanstedt) past the 58 second half. From there, Spencer Hanover picked up the tempo to 1:25 3/5 three-quarters and then drew off at will in a 28 1/5 final kicker, defeating Titans Mischief (Matt Kakaley) by 8 1/4 lengths in 1:53 4/5. Secured (Dylan Huckabone-Miller) checked in third.

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OAK GROVE MAINTAINS HANDLE GROWTH AT MEET'S HALFWAY MARK

The record-breaking season of harness racing at Oak Grove just recently passed the halfway point of the 2026 meet and the Southwest Kentucky track continues to show tremendous year-over-year gains in handle.

With Monday's (May 25) Memorial Day card run alongside many special days of racing from major thoroughbred outlets, Oak Grove successfully stayed within the shuffle of horseplayers' action and posted nearly double the handle year over year compared to the 2025 Memorial Day card. Tuesday's (May 26) 14-race card similarly showed year-over-year gains with nearly 50 percent more bet compared to the same card from 2025. Oak Grove's handle remains up roughly 28 percent year-over-year past the midpoint of the meet and up 20 percent when exempting the additional day of racing this year for the inaugural Oak Grove Trotting Derby and Oak Grove Trotting Oaks.

Alongside the strong wagering momentum in 2026, the speedy track surface and world-class competition coming through Oak Grove this year has spurred several track records before the heat and mug of summer truly arrives. In total, six track record miles have been recorded through the meet with several beating marks that stood for two years or longer.

Live racing at Oak Grove resumes on Monday (June 1) with a card featuring the second preliminary of Kentucky Sire Stakes for 4-year-olds. For more information on racing at Oak Grove, including race-by-race analysis from Ray Cotolo, visit oakgrovegaming.com.

-edited release (Oak Grove Media)

LAST CALL FOR MEADOWLANDS STALLION PAYMENTS

The most up-to-date list of stallion payments made for foals of 2025 is available on the Meadowlands Racetrack website. This is the last call for stallions not on the current list to be made eligible.

Yearlings of nominated sires may be nominated to the Meadowlands Pace and Cane Pace/Shady Daisy or the Dexter/Lady Suffolk for trotters.

Payment for these stallions must be made by June 1, 2026. The stallion nomination form can be found [here](#).

Horsemen/owners should check with their staking company to ensure that their nominated yearlings are by stallions that have made their Meadowlands stallion payment

-release (Meadowlands)

ROAD TO THE HAMBLETONIAN - WEEK 4 (MAY 28)

Week 4 of Ken Warkentin's Road to the Winning Key Farm Hambletonian has horses moving up the ranks. Big Ranger moves up to #5 after his Scioto Downs track record performance. American Power moves up to #6 following his NJSS Platinum win for Marcus Melander. Svanstedt's Nebbiolo lands at #10 after dominating in his three-year-old Bunker Hill Trot debut.

The 2026 Winning Key Farm Hambletonian (G1) will take place Saturday, August 8

RANK	HORSE	DRIVER, TRAINER, OWNER(s)
1	APEX	Dexter Dunn, Marcus Melander, Jeffrey Snyder, S R F Stable, Steve Stewart Dan Patch Award winner, money leader (\$871,798), won NJSS & NJ Classic Finals, Peter Houghton Memorial & Mohawk Million in 1:51 4/5, rallied to win Big M qualifier in 1:53 3/5 (26 1/5) May 22, Melander: "He qualified very well and we're aiming for the second leg of NJSS next Friday (June 5)."
2	SPENCER HANOVER	Jason Bartlett, Marcus Melander, Jeffrey Synder, Arthur Pronti Won Big Apple Trot Final, also Breeders Crown elimination & final, second in Valley Victory, earned \$649,889, dominated Oak Grove Derby elim in 1:53 4/5 in 3YO debut, rallied past Endurance to equal 1:51 3/5 track record in final, easily made it three-for-three this season with a 1:53 3/5 romp (track good) in NYSS @ Vernon Downs May 25.
3	ENDURANCE	Andrew McCarthy, Christopher Beaver, Super Endurance Stable, Bill Manes, Leo Fleming, Mark Moger First crop of 2021 Hambo winner Captain Corey, won six of eight starts, including two KYSS Finals, second in Mohawk Million, track record equaling 1:51 3/5 in Oak Grove Derby elim in 3YO debut, then a gallant second in final, did not race last week, not in to go.
4	DIABOLIC HILL	Todd McCarthy, Annie Stoebe, Mario Mazza, AC Crawford Racing Stable Breeders Crown elimination winner, close second in final, beat Spencer Hanover in Valley Victory in 1:53 3/5, banked \$506,636, won Big M qualifier in 1:53 3/5 on May 8, Judges scratch from 3YO debut May 23 due to track condition, post one in qualifier 2 @ Big M May 29
5	BIG RANGER	Ronnie Gillespie, Madison Global 2025 Ohio Horse of the Year went seven-for-seven, track records @ Scioto Downs & Dayton, broke in 3YO debut April 23, fourth in Oak Grove Derby elim, wire-to-wire in Silver consolation in 1:52 3/5, then set Scioto Downs track record 1:51 2/5 in OHSS May 25, Gillespie: "I did tell the owners, not this start, but the next start, if he can't trot in (1):51 comfortable, I wouldn't take him to the (Hambletonian). But he did it real comfortable tonight, so my goal is to see how well he can do it off the pace. He's going to have to come off the pace to race with those Grand Circuit horses."
6	AMERICAN POWER	Dexter Dunn, Marcus Melander, M Biasuzzi Stable Inc Won an INSS division in 1:53 1/5 & earned \$68,860 at two, beat Spencer Hanover in 1:55 3/5 qualifier May 16, rallied in 26 3/5 again to win Garden State division May 16, then won NJSS Platinum Division in 1:54 3/5 over sloppy track May 23, not in to go.
7	AI	Yannick Gingras, Ron Burke, Burke Racing Stable, Hatfield Stables, Knox Services Inc, Weaver Brusceci LLC Won NYSS Final, second in Kindergarten Final, banked \$395,073, in 3YO debut second (1:51 4/5) in Oak Grove Derby elim, fourth (1:52 1/5) from post three in Final, did not race last week, not in to go.
8	ARDONNE	Scott Zeron, Megan Scran, Philip Steinberg Won elimination in 1:54 4/5 & final William Wellwood Memorial in 1:52 4/5, second by a head to Apex in NJSS Final, banked \$289,150, won his first Big M qualifier in 1:55 1/5 May 15, rallied for third behind American Power in 3YO debut May 23, not in to go.
9	MAGIC PUNK	Ake Svanstedt, Magic Punk Inc. Second in Wellwood & Peter Houghton, third in Kindergarten Final, banked \$220,878, 1:53 1/5 stakes record Dexter Cup in 3YO debut, did not race last week, post eight in qualifier 2 @ Big M May 29.
10	NEBBIOLO	Sarah Svanstedt, Ake Svanstedt, Knutsson Trotting Inc. Rare Pinto from first crop of Captain Corey rattled off four in a row last Fall, dead heat fourth in Valley Victory, dominated 3YO debut in Bunker Hill Trot @ Plainridge in 1:54 2/5, fifth win in nine career starts, not in to go.

-edited release (Meadowlands)