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Email the Editor DGiwner@DRF.com

'Brandon' stood TALL in North America Cup defeat



Brandon Blvd (10) battles gamely in defeat as Odds On Mr Mamba (3) surges past late for the win in the G1 North America Cup at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

NEW IMAGE MEDIA



EDITOR'S EYE

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

From politics to harness racing, alternative views are part of the landscape. Two people can listen to the same politician or watch the same race and come away with a completely different opinion on what occurred.

At the conclusion of the G1 North America Cup at Woodbine Mohawk Park on June 13, I stood in the winner's circle as praise was rightfully extolled upon the deserving winner Odds On Mr Mamba. The Indiana-bred son of Odds On Equuleus left his home state for the first time in his career and did everything that was asked of him, winning both the elimination and final of the Cup while planting himself as the top dog in the 3-year-old male pacing division.

As the celebration continued, my focus quickly shifted to Brandon Blvd and trainer Andrew

Harris. His horse lost by just a half-length despite what was far and away the worst trip in the field. While any argument that Odds On Mr Mamba shouldn't be ranked No. 1 among his peers is foolish, Brandon Blvd turned in the most impressive performance in the Cup Final by far.

"If they don't have faith in him now . . . he's as tough as they come. It doesn't matter what trip you give him, he's going to be right there. He's just an incredible animal," said Harris.

With Driver Dexter Dunn in the bike, Brandon Blvd was on the move well before the half – towing Odds On Mr Mamba into the race on his cover – and engaged leader Beau Jangles on the final turn. At the head of the stretch the two were deadlocked in battle and remained that way right through the wire when Odds On Mr Mamba powered past Brandon Blvd and Beau Jangles in 1:48 1/5.

"I knew that he wouldn't quit, so I knew it was going to be close, but I also didn't like that Odds On Mr Mamba was on my back," said Harris

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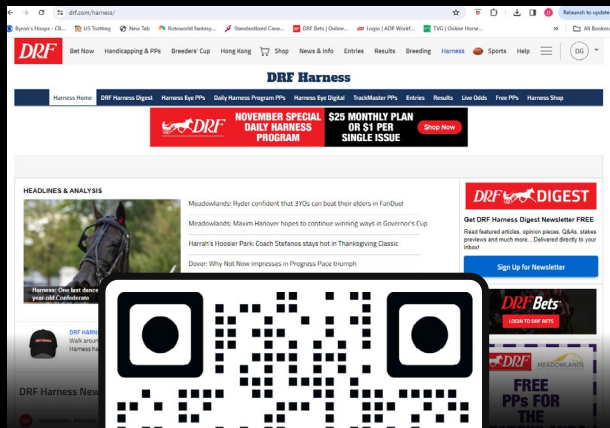


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about whether he thought Brandon Blvd could win at the head of the stretch. "When Odds On Mr Mamba's sitting on your back and you know how fast he comes home, you're like, oh, this is going to be tough. I knew he'd fight Beau Jangles, but the other one's so quick and he's getting a perfect trip. I had a sneaky feeling that one was getting too good of a trip."

But let's back up for a minute.

Beau Jangles allowed the outside speed to take position before making his move to the front between the 26 1/5 opening quarter and 54 1/5 half. If the connections of Beau Jangles mapped it out on paper, that is the exact scenario they had to be hoping for in the Final. The third quarter was reasonable in 1:21 1/5 but hardly taxing considering that the fractions last year when Louprint won were 26, 53 1/5 and 1:19. The times were very comparable to 2024 when a nearly identical setup (26 1/5, 54 1/5 and 1:21 2/5) produced a cover-trip victory for Njinsky in the Cup.

We could debate whether Beau Jangles or Odds On Mr Mamba, who wasn't stressed early but only saw the pylons for a few strides at the quarter pole before gaining cover, got the better trip but there is no denying that Brandon Blvd had to work harder than the rest. It was a gutsy performance that indeed turned a frown upside down.

Just a few days before the race, at the Tuesday post parade draw, a visibly dejected Harris made his way to the podium for an interview having just found out Brandon Blvd was saddled with the worst draw. On Saturday, following the gigantic performance from his trainee, the mood was much different.

"This is the happiest I've ever been when I lost," said Harris, who discussed the earlier disappointment. "It definitely takes the wind out of your sails. You're all excited that you made the final and your horse raced great. Then they give you post 10 and you see your two main rivals draw three and five, and they're two of the winningest posts, and you're just like, yeah, that sucks. But in Dex [Dunn] we trust. The guy's just a master."

Despite the outcome of the North America Cup, it is difficult to walk away from the race feeling confident about how the division will play out

in races like the Meadowlands Pace, Adios, Little Brown Jug and Breeders Crown down the road. The top three appear to have some separation on the field but at this point none of them appear to be Somebeachsome-where and it remains to be seen if any of them are even in the Louprint or Captaintreachous range in terms of 3-year-old performance.

"This is the happiest I've ever been when I lost,"

-Andrew Harris on finishing second in the NA Cup with Brandon Blvd

That the North America Cup went in the same time - 1:48 1/5 - as the Fan Hanover for the 3-year-old fillies certainly doesn't look great for the boys, though maybe Loua Dipa and Be Perfect Bg, who finished a head apart, are simply special. By the same token, Miki And Minnie won the older mares race in 1:48 1/5 and Ervin Hanover won the Mohawk Gold Cup for older horses in just 1:48 2/5, so maybe the track was simply slow that night. It is hard to imagine that on a night when some of the best pacers in North America were competing, the fastest time on the card of 1:48 was set by Crack Shot in an overnight race. Though he is a talented 4-year-old with credentials.



NEW IMAGE MEDIA

Trainer Andrew Harris.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

DON'T MISS A MILE.

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It is also worth considering that in 2024 when Nijinsky won in 1:48 1/5, the Mohawk Gold Cup went to Linedrive Hanover in 1:47 2/5 and It's A Love Thing won the Fan Hanover in 1:48 2/5. So maybe the 3-year-old boys and girls going in the same time isn't a big deal and the older group of horses just weren't on their games on June 13.

Speaking of the track, any consideration of the stakes results should include some discussion about track bias. Although there was a stretch headwind throughout the night, it definitely died down by the midway point of the 13-race card. I'm not sure what role the wind played on the outcome of the races but none of the seven major races – five stakes finals and two Invitationals – were won by the horse on the lead at the three-quarter call. In fact, the closest any winner got at that call was third. Plus five of the seven winners won from second- or third-over. To say that is uncommon in this day and age where early speed is dominant would be a massive understatement.

Perhaps that makes Beau Jangles' mile in the North America Cup a little more appealing and also flatters the speed efforts from Be Perfect Bg and Lou Hill, who both suffered narrow losses. Ultimately, we'll find out more in the coming weeks. The next battleground for the 3-year-old male pacers is the Meadowlands Pace, with eliminations (if necessary) set for July 4 and the final on July 11. We could see Beau Jangles perhaps at Woodbine Mohawk Park on June 27 for a leg of the Ontario Sire Stakes and Odds On Mr Mamba has a leg of the Indiana Sire Stakes at Harrah's Hoosier Park one night earlier if his connections are interested, but Brandon Blvd will be on the sidelines.

"He won't race until The Meadowlands Pace. He'll get a much-deserved week off here and get freshened up, because I'm sure that was a taxing trip on him," said Harris. "Those are three horses that are going to battle all year and it's going to be fun because I don't think there's a lot that separates all three."

North America Cup Night News and Notes

Trainer Andrew Harris also said that Yo Tillie scratched out of the Armbro Flight because she tied up. The issue first occurred when she was warming up for a qualifier on June 6 at The Meadowlands. Harris said after considering her bloodwork numbers, the toll of shipping up to Canada and the fact that her next three races would be at The Meadowlands that it didn't make sense to subject her to the trip.

"It sucks that she's not up here, I would have loved to have her up here, but I also want her to be a hundred percent," said Harris, who added that Yo Tillie might qualify this weekend at The Meadowlands (she is in race 17 on Friday morning).

Trainer Marcus Melander has had the hot hand lately, winning the Goodtimes with Neighver Punt and Armbro Flight with Bourbonista S at Woodbine Mohawk Park on June 13 and four stakes at The Meadowlands the night before. On the Friday card his victories included a track record-



DERICK GIWNER

Odds On Mr Mamba being led out onto the Woodbine Mohawk Park track by trainer Melanie Wrenn and driver James MacDonald.

equaling mile by Super Chapter in 1:49 3/5 and a world record of 1:50 by Nix Nacken.

When expressing my surprise by how aggressively Super Chapter was handled in his 4-year-old debut, Melander said that he gave no instructions to driver Dexter Dunn. "I just told him that he was ready to race," said the trainer.

As for the world record by Nix Nacken, Melander said it was a perfect storm in that the track got just enough rain to make the surface ultra-fast. He added that you can water the track all day but it doesn't measure up to the rain.

Trainer Chris Ryder kept his streak alive for Roses Are Red wins. His Twin B Joe Fresh won the race in 2024 and 2025. She tired after a first-over trip on June 13 but stablemate Miki And Minnie was able to get the job done. Former Dan Patch Award winner Twin B Joe Fresh hasn't been able to shine in two starts this year since returning from injury. When I asked Ryder about her, he simply responded, "I haven't been able to figure her out yet this year."

Something new on the North America Cup wagering menu was a \$5 All-Stakes Pick 3 wager. While the concept of higher minimums are more of a throwback to decades ago rather than a new idea, it was nice to see the variety added to the menu. The wager did reasonably well with \$26,437 in Canadian dollars sent through the windows, making it the second-largest Pick 3 pool of the night (they have rolling Pick 3s). That amount shows there is an appetite for a higher minimum option and hopefully more tracks will experiment with it. I know at least one track is planning a similar option.

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Miss Jum Jabber on the verge of being a household name

By Jay Bergman

The arrival of Miss Jum Jabber, a favorite in one of two Pennsylvania Sire Stakes races for sophomore pacing fillies Saturday at Pocono, is hard to fathom. When you consider her trainer and owner Brett Pelling hadn't an inkling of what would come from his purchase at last fall's Harrisburg mixed auction.

"I trained her last year for Order By Stables," Pelling said. "She had issues and we decided to turn her out and I was expecting to bring her back in last October and try to have her ready before February to see if she would be worth staking."

When Pelling looked to pick up the Bettor's Wish filly and take her back into training the owner had something else in mind. "I found out that they had put her into the sale," Pelling said.

Thinking that the filly had promise if not unlimited ability, Pelling made a calculation before the sale. "I was thinking she could be a non-winners of two type horse that for the right money was worth a shot."

When Pelling went to the auction he made an initial bid of \$3,000 that eventually went to \$4,000 before the bidding stopped cold.

A name change to Miss Jum Jabber followed in homage to a real estate agent that Pelling mistakenly added to his phonebook as Jum rather than Jim.

Pelling concedes there was nothing overwhelmingly special about Miss Jum Jabber as he trained her down this winter and looked to explore the racing options in February. "I had about eight 3-year-olds with the same situation," Pelling said. "She was training well but not standing out from the group."

Miss Jum Jabber was kept eligible to the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes and the Kentucky Sire Stakes program. "I also paid her into the two Grand Circuit races at The Red Mile," said Pelling, taking a minimalist's approach with his inexpensive purchase.

Pelling also nominated his filly for the Weiss series at Pocono since she would be ready early and would meet the non-winners of two company. He had expectations she could compete with that group.

It wasn't until Pelling qualified Miss Jum Jabber that his opinion of her would change in a meaningful way. "When she came home in 25 seconds in her first start was the first time I recognized how good she could be," said Pelling. "Most horses you have high expectations for never live up to them. She's been the exact opposite."

Following a loss in her first start where she raced conservatively and finished with wild abandon, Miss Jum Jabber has reeled off seven straight wins heading into Saturday's contest. She's advanced far from the level of expectations and now ranks among the top fillies in North America.

Pelling sent her to the Weiss series where she captured two legs.

"I had a decision to make whether to race her in the Weiss final or put her in the first leg of the Sire Stakes," said Pelling, who opted out of a lucrative purse only to find himself matched with last year's 2-year-old Dan Patch award winner Loua Dipa in the May 1 opener at Harrah's Philadelphia.

That decision looked like a mistake for the first half of the Sire Stakes race as Loua Dipa marched to the front in a relatively slow 56 4/5 fraction while Miss Jum Jabber trailed in seventh at the same call. The pace accelerated and driver Andrew McCarthy followed third-over cover with Miss Jum Jabber but hardly seemed to have a chance to catch Loua Dipa, who would pace home in 27 flat. Miss Jum Jabber was undeterred by the obstacles or the speed and flashed a 26 2/5 quarter to take down the champion in a 1:51 3/5 mile that announced her arrival on the national stage.

Pelling's stable is always conscious of developing talent, with the trainer often sending horses repeatedly to race from the back to encourage good habits of finishing strongly on each occasion. Miss Jum Jabber used that approach to capture a Pennsylvania All Stars event at Pocono on May 11 followed by an overnight win on May 25 in advance of the second Sire Stakes leg on June 5.

With Loua Dipa entered in the Grade 1 Fan Hanover, Miss Jum Jabber posted her first 1:50 mile over the five-eighths track at The Meadows, doing much of it on the front end for McCarthy.

What was revealing about Miss Jum Jabber in that mile was her explosive burst of speed that saw McCarthy quickly shift her into gear right before the quarter and gain control of the race in a near instant.

"That was really impressive," said Pelling, who watched the race from New Jersey. "That's where she started to remind me a little bit of Confederate. A horse that would just turn it on every time you called on him."



Miss Jum Jabber defeated recent Fan Hanover winner Loua Dipa in an early May PA Sire Stakes event at Harrah's Philadelphia.

Miss Jum Jabber not only had that quarter-move in her arsenal but a 53 2/5 final half that sealed the victory.

On Saturday, Miss Jum Jabber drew post five in the first \$52,977 division (race seven) and looks to continue her winning form. She'll once again do battle with Bahama Momma (post 6), who was a solid second behind her in The Meadows leg of the Sire Stakes, along with five others.

Loua Dipa, fresh off a major two weeks at Woodbine Mohawk Park where she captured the Fan Hanover final in a thriller – outdueling the previously unbeaten Be Perfect BG in a record setting 1:48 1/5 mile – is the heavy favorite from the pole in the \$53,377 second division and race 10 on the afternoon program. She could get a test from Darlin's Angel (post 5), a Sire Stakes winner in May at Harrah's Philadelphia that will be making her first in nearly six weeks for trainer Juan Cano.

Pelling once again chose the Sire Stakes in Pennsylvania ahead of another race and will next send Miss Jum Jabber to Oak Grove.

"The first leg is on the following Tuesday (June 23)," said Pelling. "So we're going to have to miss that and come back for the second leg on July 7."

While Miss Jum Jabber doesn't have a wide array of Grand Circuit stakes to compete in, she does have the Pennsylvania and Kentucky program, with Pelling hoping she can advance to the lucrative finals in each.

"We're going to be up against Loua Dipa in both," said Pelling, noting that the defending champion is also dual-eligible.

Obviously having not been a mile in the 1:48 range, it's too early to tell whether the first meeting between the two star-fillies is conclusive in any way. Still, with only eight races on her card, Miss Jum Jabber has attracted enough attention and is already a major player in the division.

Pelling noted that there has of course been interest from buyers looking to purchase his filly.

"We've had some offers," Pelling said, "But I think we're going to keep her. With the Kentucky program there is a lot of money she can race for next year as well."

As to her Grand Circuit future, Miss Jum Jabber is not Breeders Crown eligible.

"Would I consider supplementing her?" Pelling said in response to the question. "I think she would have to win one of the Sire Stakes finals, either Pennsylvania or Kentucky."

For now, success in Saturday's race should help her secure a spot in the Pennsylvania final.

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AT THE TRACK

By Darin Zoccali [AtTheTrack7](#)

If the industry doesn't care about the Triple Crown, why should anyone else?

With the draw for the MGM Yonkers Trot and MGM Grand Messenger Stakes taking place this week, the Triple Crown season kicks off in the world of harness racing. Of course, in the thoroughbred world, the Triple Crown season just concluded.

Sadly, neither series is thriving at the moment. In fact, far from it.

The problems facing both series, while not the same, do share a striking similarity. Simply put, there are too many options for horses to race for a substantial amount of money.

Thoroughbred racing faces another issue that compounds their problem, the perception some trainers have that horses can no longer run back effectively in two weeks. Obviously, harness racing does not have that problem. In addition, the first leg of the thoroughbred Triple Crown, the Kentucky Derby, is thriving, setting new records year after year. The Preakness has suffered from a lack of Derby participants, especially the Derby winner running back. The Belmont Stakes has been run with success at Saratoga the past three years while Belmont is rebuilt. So, it has been a tricky time for that racing series. But the issues they face are relatively new, within the last five or 10 years. Harness racing's Triple Crown has been facing concerns for far longer than that.

First, there are races within harness racing's Triple Crown series that are not even classified as Grade One races. The Yonkers Trot and Messenger Stakes (both being contested at 1 1/4 miles this year) are Grade Two events. The Cane Pace on the pacing side is also a Grade Two race, which means two-thirds of the Pacing Triple Crown fail to reach Grade One status.

I have previously written that in order for a race to maintain its stature as a Triple Crown race, it should need to carry Grade One status, and a part of that is ensuring the race carries the required purse of a Grade One race. For a Triple Crown race to not be a Grade One is rather ridiculous, to be quite honest.

While 10 horses have entered the Yonkers Trot, allowing for a full field,

only seven will tackle the Messenger, which is all the evidence we need that the Triple Crown is an afterthought to many in the industry.

On the trotting side, the second and third jewels of the Triple Crown are the Hambletonian and the Kentucky Futurity, the two most prestigious races for sophomore trotters in the country, so the Trotting Triple Crown includes those two incredibly important races. On the pacing side, there is an argument to be made that aside from the Little Brown Jug, the other two events are just not viewed as being on the same level as some of the other options for 3-year-old pacers.

Clearly the North America Cup and the Meadowlands Pace are the two most significant races for the glamour boys division not named the Little Brown Jug. There is certainly an argument to be made that beyond that, the Adios would be the next race in the line of "significance," which of course is a subjective viewpoint. But I would personally be quite astonished if anyone in the industry listed the Cane Pace or the Messenger Stakes in the same breath as the North America Cup, Meadowlands Pace or even the Adios.

Now, thoroughbred racing is facing a similar issue – the historical significance of a race like the Preakness and the apparent perception that it has become a race not worth targeting when there are so many other races available. Just last year, the winning Kentucky Derby trainer cited a preference for a race like the Travers Stakes at Saratoga as opposed to the Preakness. Now, that is at no fault of the Preakness. The purse of the race is \$2 million, making it the second largest purse for a 3-year-old restricted race in the country. They are a victim of circumstance and placement on the calendar considering how thoroughbred trainers view the modern game.

Harness racing faces no such issue. The industry has chosen to remain in the past as races have grown in stature and prominence around the Triple Crown, essentially rendering races like the Messenger and the Cane Pace less significant. If those races cannot receive the financial support to place it at the top of purse spectrum for 3-year-old pacers, then quite frankly they shouldn't be Triple Crown races. People have asked me why doesn't the Triple Crown have to include the absolute best races for the division, a question which I do not even know the answer to and a question that really embodies the overall issue. People just don't seem to care.

Full disclosure, until I saw an article about it the other day, I did not even know the Messenger and Yonkers Trot were taking place next Friday (June 26). This time of year, I think about the North America Cup card and the Meadowlands Pace card. Case in point, only two horses from the North America Cup Final (the 4th and 5th place finishers) are racing in the Messenger, with many of the major players from that event targeting the Meadowlands Pace instead.

We can continue to go down this path and operate in a manner that says we don't really care about the Triple Crowns of harness racing. But if we do, we cannot expect anyone else to care either.

No eliminations for MGM Yonkers Trot, MGM Grand Messenger Stakes

Eliminations were not required for either the MGM Yonkers Trot or the MGM Grand Messenger Stakes, the opening leg of the Trotting and Pacing Triple Crowns for 3-year-old colts and geldings, and so the 10 entered for the MGM Yonkers Trot and the seven that dropped in the box for the MGM Grand Messenger Stakes will advance directly to the Grade 2 finals on Friday, June 26 at MGM Yonkers Raceway.

Both finals will be raced at 1 1/4 miles, and the post position draws for the finals will be held late afternoon on Monday, June 22. The companion filly races - the \$100,000 (estimated) Park MGM Pace and \$115,000 (est.) New York New York Mile - will also be drawn then.

The MGM Yonkers Trot will carry a purse of \$300,000 (est.) and will have eight horses on the gate plus two trailers. Here are the finalists in alphabetical order:

- AI
- Ardonne
- Create Escape
- Inexpressable
- Kingmen

- Nordic Dancer S
- Requiem
- Secured
- Silverstein
- Spencer Hanover

As for the MGM Grand Messenger Stakes, the purse will be \$200,000 (est.) and the finalists are as follows, again in alphabetical order:

- AI Papi
- Apocalypsebluechip
- Fragment
- Frantic Hanover
- Hunt Off The Press
- Melillo
- Mighty Matt

MGM Yonkers Raceway is currently operating on a Monday through Friday live racing schedule with post time each night at 6:45 p.m. (EDT).

-edited release (Yonkers)

Knoxville feeling right at home in New York for Ray Schnittker



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman ✕ [BergmanJay](#)

The New York Sire Stakes program has become rather lucrative for 3-year-olds over the last few years as the second-tier option has diverted many horses away from the top class and assured six-figure purses. Trainer Ray Schnittker has been a long-time veteran of the New York program and has found success through the years with a varied assortment of pacing and trotting talent.

Last Friday (June 12), Schnittker sent out his latest success story at Vernon Downs – the sophomore Knoxville – to a monster open lengths victory in the \$121K New York Sire Stakes for sophomore colts and geldings. The 1:50 3/5 clocking was his best to date.

Knoxville was a horse no one heard of in 2025 and in large part that had more to do with just one victory in 10 starts, and that came at his home track of Goshen in a New York County Fair stakes event. Despite the lack of victories, Knoxville, a son of Schnittker's Meadowlands Pace champion Huntsville, managed to earn enough points to reach the New York Sire Stakes championship and then finished a distant third to division winner Fragment in the \$300,000 final at Batavia Downs.

"He had a bruise in a hind cannon bone that bothered him all of last year," said Schnittker of the subpar season. "I guess in hindsight we probably should've stopped with him."

The off-season did a world of good for Knoxville, and he has returned sound and more than capable of competing in the top Sire Stakes division. For the 67-year-old trainer and sometimes driver, there has been a shift in how he brings horses along.

"These horses have to race so hard every week," Schnittker said. "So I try to go easy on them in the early races so they can still be strong to the end."

Schnittker qualified Knoxville at Pocono with Tyler Buter guiding the colt to the front and cut rated fractions before being outsprinted in the stretch by the classy Pleaseletmeknow in a 1:52 2/5 mile. A first pari-mutuel win came on May 4 with Buter giving Knoxville a two-hole trip that he converted with ease. Another solid off-the-pace effort a week later was the final tune-up for the Sire Stakes program, with Knoxville entered in a \$82,500 division in the first Sire Stakes leg at Saratoga on May 24.

Knoxville paced a 26 1/5 first quarter over a sloppy Saratoga surface before yielding to the favorite and then perfect five-for-five Unmatched Wisdom. Knoxville would finish third beaten just a length, but Schnittker made no excuses. "Chuck (Connor Jr.) has a really nice horse," Schnittker said of Unmatched Wisdom. "Tyler (Buter) was having trouble. The horse was running out on the turns."

The scene shifted to Buffalo Raceway on June 3 for the second leg of the Sire Stakes. With just one division the purse swelled to \$121K, but this

time the posts were switched and the competition was much stronger, as freshman champion Fragment joined the mix along with first-leg winner Unmatched Wisdom.

Buter had to use Knoxville hard early on, getting parked by Unmatched Wisdom through a 27 3/5 first quarter and then keeping that rival working through a 55 3/5 half-retake. Committed to the pocket this time, Knoxville kept up well as Fragment tried to wear down the leader through the final turn. In the stretch, Unmatched Wisdom drifted out, opening a seam along the pylons that allowed Knoxville to explode on through and get the best of Fragment by a length in a 1:53 2/5 mile.

From a first leg where it appeared Knoxville still had some learning to do, the Buffalo win announced the colt's arrival and his victory at Vernon signaled that he could be the horse to beat in this division when Fragment returns to Sire Stakes action.

"He is sound now and he really tries hard," said Schnittker of Knoxville. "His next start will be at Goshen on July 4."

A \$75,000 Harrisburg purchase at the 2024 auction, Knoxville is the third foal from the Rock N Roll Heaven-sired mare Let's Fall In Love. The dam is a half-sister to the millionaire Romantic Moment, the dam of 1:46 4/5 winner Rockyroad Hanover. With Rockyroad Hanover a son of Captaintreacherous, Knoxville has a similar pedigree with the Hunts-

ville, also a son of Somebeachesomewhere on the paternal side.

"He's been great," Schnittker said of Huntsville's stallion career. "He sires horses that are a lot like Somebeachesomewhere's. They are big, strong and tough."

The results speak for themselves. The 2017 Meadowlands Pace winner is off to an impressive start, with his first four crops effective at the highest levels in and outside of New York. "He's got two Meadowlands Pace winners already," said Schnittker, referring to the last two winners, Legendary Hanover (2024) and Madden Oaks (2025).

Knoxville will stay in New York with the Empire Breeders and

Sire Stakes legs the primary objectives. "I made him eligible to some of the races late in the year at Hoosier Park," said Schnittker.

Shifting to the promising freshman in his stable, Schnittker sounded quite excited about a Greenshoe-sired filly named Slave To Fashion. "She's the first foal from Brickhouse Babe, a filly I had that finished second in the Doherty from post 10," said Schnittker.

Brickhouse Babe, a daughter of Walner, lost that 2021 contest to Venerable, who would go on to capture the Mohawk Million. Brickhouse Babe's dam Royal Assets finished second for Schnittker in the 2012 Merrie Annabelle, the precursor to the Doherty.

Slave To Fashion made her second qualifier at Pocono on June 17 a winning one with Schnittker confidently sitting her third throughout the mile and then allowing her to sprint to a 1:59 1/5 victory capped off by a 28 2/5 final quarter.

On the pacing side, the Huntsville-sired Wardensville, a \$160K yearling sold at Harrisburg last fall, is a colt that Schnittker is high on following his first baby race at Pocono. He was third timed in 1:58 2/5 on June 10 and is slated to make his pari-mutuel debut over that same oval in race five on June 21.



FOTOWON

Knoxville was a Sire Stakes winner in 1:50 3/5 at Vernon Downs on June 12.

Captain Optimistic looks to continue fast start in Graduate

By Ken Weingartner

Captain Optimistic has gotten his 4-year-old season off to a fast start. Literally.

The son of Captaintreacheraus-Cinamony, who has divided his time this year between stallion duty and racing, paced the season's fastest mile to date this past Friday at the Meadowlands, where he stopped the timer in 1:46 4/5 in a second-round division of the Graduate Series for 4-year-olds.

It was his second victory in three starts this year, with his first triumph coming in 1:48 1/5 in an Open Handicap on May 17 at Harrah's Philadelphia. That time, in Captain Optimistic's seasonal debut, equaled the track record for 4-year-old pacing horses. In between those wins, he finished a dead-heat second in the SendItIn Invitational on May 24 at Philly. Scott Zeron was in the sulky for trainer Nancy Takter in the two most recent starts after Jason Bartlett drove Captain Optimistic in the opener.

"He looks great since he's come back," said Zeron, who has driven Captain Optimistic in 12 of his past 13 races dating back to last year's Little Brown Jug in mid-September. "The conditions were actually kind of ideal last week after rain had passed through so early, but that (1:46 4/5) performance was a bit of a culmination of his starts this year.

"He started off the year phenomenal, winning in (1):48 1/5, and then I sat in the two-hole (in the SendItIn), and it didn't really work out, but he went across the wire so strong. Then he had a week off and I think he came into the Meadowlands race extremely fit and really brave.

"The competition is always going to be tough, but to have him come back the way he did, and to be able to race against 4-year-olds for right now, it's great."

In the Graduate, over a "wet fast" track, Captain Optimistic went to the lead on the first turn before Papis Pistol took over in a 26 3/5 opening quarter. Fallout, the 8-5 favorite, was next to the front but Captain Optimistic surged to the top spot from third as he reached the half in 53 2/5. After reaching three-quarters in 1:20 1/5, Captain Optimistic kicked home in 26 3/5 to win by three-quarters of a length over a hard-charging Ayeaye Captain Deo.

"It was a huge effort," Zeron said. "We're not going to look to replicate 1:20 1/5 too many times in a row, but aside from that, it was great to see. I think that's the first time I've won in (1):46. And four quarters in 26 seconds, you're going fast the whole time. For him to do that, it just shows what he's capable of.

"He's pretty tough. Nancy changed some equipment on him the last couple starts and he's probably steering the best he has in his lifetime. Obviously, when you're going in a straight line it's easier to go faster. The goal now is to manage him and lead him into the big races as fresh as possible; it'll be a team effort with Nancy and I. I'm very excited."

Captain Optimistic has finished in the top three in 29 of 34 career races, with 14 wins and \$1.18 million in earnings. Last year, his victories included three graded stakes: the Cane Pace (G2), Monument Circle (G2) and a division of the Bluegrass (G3). He was second in the Progress Pace and Matron (both G2) and third in the Breeders Crown and Little Brown Jug (both G1).

"He's a big, strong horse," said Mike Gulotta, the CEO of Deo Volente Farms, which bought into Captain Optimistic in October and handles the stallion for the Captain Optimistic Syndicate ownership group. "Lots of speed, lots of class, lots of good breeding. Obviously, we bought into the horse thinking he is going to be something special. Three races into the season, he's won two, come in second once, and has the fastest mile of the year. We can't be unhappy about that. Every day is not Christmas, but it certainly feels like it so far."

Captain Optimistic has bred a limited book this year, by design, and it appears to agree with him.

"He's been breeding, so he's been having fun all winter going back and forth breeding, training, breeding, training," Zeron said. "He's gotten just a little studtier, and his body has gotten a little bit bigger and stronger."

Captain Optimistic is the 3-1 second choice on the morning line in Saturday's first of two \$50,000 Graduate divisions at the Meadowlands. Prince Hal Hanover, who is competing in the series for the first time, is the 5-2 favorite for driver Todd McCarthy and trainer Dr. Ian Moore. He has hit the board in all six of his races this season, with a win in the Charles Juravinski Memorial Cup and a nose loss in the Battle of Lake Erie (both G2).

Go Go Grasshopper, who also won a Graduate division last week, is the 4-1 third choice for trainer/driver Joe Bongiorno.

The 3-1 morning-line favorite in the second division of pacers is Fallout, who finished third last week. Tim Tetrick will drive the stallion for trainer Ron Burke.

There also will be two Graduate third-round divisions for the 4-year-old trotters on Saturday at the Big M.

Zeron will be behind Delaney Hanover in the second division. The mare made her seasonal debut last week and finished fifth in a Graduate division, timed in 1:50 3/5 with a 26 3/5 last quarter. She is the 7-2 second choice on the morning line Saturday behind 8-5 favorite Super Chapter, who won his seasonal debut in the Graduate last week in 1:49 3/5 for driver Dexter Dunn and trainer Marcus Melander.

Last year, Delaney Hanover hit the board in eight of 11 races and earned \$449,064. Her five wins included the Kentucky Filly Futurity (G1) and a division of the Bluegrass (G3). She finished second in the Delmonica Hanover and third in the Hambletonian Oaks (both G1) for Zeron and trainer Lucas Wallin.

"She's come back great," Zeron said. "Unfortunately, her first few starts are going to be against the boys. At least it's restricted to 4-year-olds only, but there's a lot of brand names in these races.

"But she's a very fun horse and was extremely exciting to drive last year with the way she closed on so many great horses. We're just hoping that this year she's a little bigger and stronger to go faster, and a first start in (1):50 and a piece is a good sign to begin the year. I'm very happy with her."

The first Graduate division for the trotters includes more of the "brand names" Zeron was referring to: 9-5 morning-line favorite On To Norway with his 27-race win streak, multiple-graded-stakes winner Go Dog Go (at 3-1) and 2025 Breeders Crown champion Meshuggah (4-1).

Racing begins at 6:35 p.m. (EDT) at the Meadowlands.

1-ODDS ON MR MAMBA

Earnings: \$740,405 / Win Time: 1:47 4/5

Dr: J. MacDonald / Tr: M. Wrenn

Owner: Odds On Racing

Breeding: Odds On Equuleus-Honky Tonk Woman

The North America Cup winner rose to the top spot with an elimination win and stays at the top of the heap after taking Canada's big one. Wrenn: "He shipped into Mohawk like a champion. He ate his food and drank. Shipping can knock horses right off their game. Nearing the wire in the Cup, James said he found another gear. He wants to win. It was a fun weekend. We'll race in Indiana in sire stakes on the 26th."

Road to the Meadowlands Pace

by Dave Little

2-BRANDON BLVD

Earnings: \$660,977 / Win Time: 1:48 1/5

Dr: D. Dunn / Tr: A. Harris

Owner: Punisher 11 Stable LLC

Breeding: Downbytheseaside-Alexis Faith

Raced giant from post 10, finished second in the Cup. Harris: "I'm thrilled with the horse. He couldn't have raced any better. That's the problem with the 10 hole, you can't make your own luck. He'll take two weeks off. He just paced three starts in a row in 1:48 1/5. How much sharper does he have to get?"

3-BEAU JANGLES

Earnings: \$1,416,919 / Win Time: 1:48 3/5

Dr: B. McClure / Tr: Dr. I. Moore

Owners: Graham Grace Stables LLC,

Kiwi Stables LLC, Bolton Stables

Breeding: Cattlewash-Mrs Major Hill

Put in another big try, but finished third for a second straight start, behind this poll's Top 2 once again. There's no shame in that. Moore: "I thought he got a great drive. He was in a place to win this time. Brandon Blvd went the best of all three of them. Odds On Mr Mamba had a perfect trip behind him. I checked everything, and my horse, he's good. His next start will be a week from Saturday in the Ontario Sire Stakes Gold."



BURKE BRIGADE DOMINATES GAITWAY FRESHMAN QUALIFIERS

Ron Burke-trained horses won eight of the 13 qualifiers for 2-year-olds on Wednesday (June 17) at Gaitway Farm, which hosted its second of three weekly sessions for freshmen pacers and trotters.

Burke, who sent out 29 rookies during the day, swept the three qualifiers for 2-year-old male pacers – with Midwind Buxton, Rose Run Cowboy and Loud Luxury – before adding victories with colt trotter Pearl Of Hanover, filly pacers Lets Go Fishin, Win Me Over and Miss Chevious, and filly trotter Nevis Peak.

No other trainer had multiple wins with the 2-year-olds. Linda Toscano got a victory with colt trotter Captain Kenny J, Chris Ryder with filly pacer Wendy J Stings, Joe Bongiorno with filly pacer Alone Again, Christopher Choate with filly pacer Perfect Body, and Marie Dupont with filly trotter Sister Lise.

Rose Run Cowboy (a son of Huntsville-Blameitonthenight) was the day's fastest winner, closing with a 26 2/5 last quarter as he rallied from third, 3-lengths back, to win by a head over stablemate Stonebridge Blitz (Tall Dark Stranger-Shouldabeenatd) in 1:54. Tim Tetrick drove the colt, who was purchased for \$90,000 at the Standardbred Horse Sale and is owned by Thomas and Scott Dillon. He was bred by Larry Schlabach.

Midwind Buxton (Stay Hungry-Scorn) got his second Q win with a gate-to-wire 1:55 2/5 score with Yannick Gingras in the sulky. The colt, a 1:56 1/5 winner last week, coasted home 2 lengths in front for owners Burke Racing Stable, Weaver Brussemi LLC, Brad Grant and Phil Collura. Bred by Midwind Farms, he was a \$95,000 buy at the Lexington Selected Yearling Sale.

Loud Luxury (Captaintreacheraus-Shanghai Seelster) got the lead in a 1:01 1/5 opening half but soon thereafter was in the pocket behind stablemate Dirigo (Papi Rob Hanover-Summer Charm) on the way to three-quarters in 1:29. Loud Luxury and driver Tetrick found room inside and sprinted home in :26.4 to win by a half-length over Dirigo in 1:56. The colt, a \$70,000 Standardbred Horse Sale purchase, is owned by Burke Racing Stable, Libby And Purnel, Knox Services, and Frank Baldachino. He was bred by 1876472 Ontario Inc. and Princeton Farms.

[READ MORE](#)

OAKES SENDS OUT FIVE BABY WINNERS AT POCONO

Trainer Hunter Oakes came out firing during the Wednesday morning (into early afternoon) qualifying session at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania, sending out five winners, including two who now have two victories. Both were driven by Tyler Buter, Pocono's leading driver, who was the top sulkysitter during the baby races with four victories.

Oakes sent out two winning males on each gait, including the fastest colt, Celebrity Dubai (Chapter Seven – Pennies From Above), who closed in 57 3/5 from the pocket for a 1:59 3/5 win for driver Jason Bartlett and the ownership of Flying A Racing Stable and Celebrity Farms. Oakes's repeat winner, driven by Buter, was the colt Celebrity Hunter (Captain Corey – Are You Ready), also part-owned by Celebrity Farms, in 2:00 4/5.

Fastest trotter overall was another offspring of Captain Corey, the filly Cabaletta Hanover (dam Caviart Jenny), who blitzed home in 28 1/5 from

the pocket to be up in 1:58 3/5 for driver Matt Kakaley and trainer Emily Bost, co-owner with Steve Salerno. Trainer-driver Åke Svanstedt continued sending out power performers with two filly winners, Sip Away (Ecurie D DK – Amazing Tilly S) in 2:01 and Woke Up Winning (Walner - Morning Glow) in 2:03.

As mentioned, Oakes had a double in the pacing male ranks, but here he was outdone by trainer Travis Alexander, who had the other three winners in this section. Quickest was Primary Section, a colt by American Ideal – Preeminence, who came his last half in 57 to stop the timer in 1:57 1/5 for driver Matt Kakaley and the partnership of Alexander Racing Stable LLC, C M T Farms, EVM Racing LLC, and James Scarpas.

Kakaley also partnered with Alexander on the colt Harbaugh (Downbytheseaside – Hometown Blues), who won in 1:57 4/5 - 56 4/5 - 28 1/5 from the pocket. Ridge Warren piloted the other successful member of Team Alexander, the Heston Blue Chip – Counterparty Risk colt Current Events (also co-owned by Alexander Racing) in 1:59 4/5 - 58 1/5 - 29.

Oakes's duo among the pacing colts were Dapper Station (Captain Crunch – Dandy's Sweetness) in 1:57 2/5 - 57 2/5 - 28 2/5 for Buter, and Babylon Blue Chip (Huntsville – Onassis Blue Chip), triumphant in 1:58 3/5 - 57 - 28 2/5 for Bartlett.

Buter drove the repeat winner among the pacing fillies, Wine Down Wednesday (Huntsville – Tequila Monday), here successful in 2:00 while coming home in 56 2/5 despite broken equipment for Oakes. The fastest in this group was Huntrix (Huntsville – Ubettergo Go), wire-to-wire in 1:57 2/5 - 56 1/5 for driver Ridge Warren, trainer Joe Pavia Jr., and the ownership of Steven Held, Vincent Ferriero Jr., Todd Frocione, and Pint Size Racing LLC.

With 10 babies (including three trotters) winning in sub-2:00 and the stakes season fast approaching, this report or next week's will be the last summary before the youngsters go to the pari-mutuel battles. Replays of the Pocono baby qualifiers can be viewed at www.phha.org.

-edited release (Pocono/PHHA)

FRESHMEN CONTINUE TO IMPRESS AT HARRAH'S PHILLY

The 2-year-olds returned to Harrah's Philadelphia 15 races strong for a Tuesday baby qualifier section. Pacers of both sexes came together for five races each; with the first pari-mutuel trotting 2-year-olds on the Philly card this Thursday, there were two events for colts and three for fillies.

Lindy On The Wall, an altered son of International Moni – Dancin On The Wall, looks like he's ready to take on tough opposition right now, as on Tuesday he put in an impressive 1:56 4/5 mile to take the fastest freshman trot of the day. A winner from the pocket in 2:01 - 28 3/5 last week with trainer Eddie Dennis in the sulky, this week the driving fell to Andrew McCarthy, and he put the youngster right on the lead, coming home in 57 2/5 - 28 2/5 for owners E & K Stable Inc., William Mears, and Roy Parker Jr.

Andrew McCarthy also drove the fastest freshman filly trotter (in fact, he had a win in both sections of the pace, too), with the Captain Corey – All Along miss with the amusing name of Check UR Ego Amigo coming home in 1:59 4/5. The Nicklas Andersen-trained baby, owned by Concord Stud Farm LLC, came out of the pocket to the lead down the backstretch and finished out nicely in 58 3/5 - 29.

You go over to the pacing side, but there's "A. McCarthy" again, driving the fastest male to have success, Whass Up Cap, a Captaintreacheraus – Southwind Serenity gelding, who had not only the fastest mile clocking, 1:56 2/5, but also the individual quickest last half among the males, 56 3/5, in winning for trainer Andrew Stafford and Tribbett Racing.

The unifying force among the quickest pacers by sex was sire Captaintreacheraus, as he also was the father of filly Lindy Believer (dam Believe Its Lindy), who was the fastest of all the Tuesday morning freshmen with a sparkling time of 1:55 4/5, flashing the afterburners in 55 - 27 2/5 in the engine victory. Jason Bartlett sulkysat for trainer Petter Engblom and the partnership of Engblom Farms LLC, R A W Equine Inc., Evans Nation, and Hickory Hollow Stables. All five filly divisions, and four of the colts, went clocked in sub-2:00 time.

Andrew McCarthy was tops driving five successful babies, while Nancy Takter sent out three success stories.

There may be one more baby summary coming after this one – most of the area ovals are starting to card the freshmen in overnight races, and the Pennsylvania stakes season, both Sire Stakes / Stallion Series and Fair Sire Stakes, have Opening Day as July 1. Replays of these qualifiers are scheduled to be available at www.phha.org.

-edited release (Philadelphia/PHHA)

RACE OF THE WEEK

10 MEADOWLANDS SAT

1 Mile Pace. GRADUATE SERIES. 4 YEAR OLD OPEN - 3RD LEG (DECLARATION FEE - \$1,000) Purse \$50,000
EXACTA AND TRIFECTA | 50 CENT LATE PICK 4 (10-11-12-13) (\$50,000 GUARANTEED POOL) (TAKEOUT 15%)

1 BRUNO NO NO NO (L)		b h 4, by All Bets Off, Winbak Alice by Real Artist		Last 5 Sts - \$48,907		1:48.1 Wbs 7/8		26 M1		1 0 0 1		\$6,000 26		* 10 5 2 2		+\$113,088								
41:48.1 (7/8) * \$11,309 LON-CL \$36,000		Pollack Racing LLC, Venetia, Pa		E. Robinson 148-18-19-17 (122)		Br. - Seelster Farms Inc, Lucan, On		25 M1		0 0 0 0		- 25 Tot		23 6 2 3		\$72,327								
5-1 J. Bartlett 131-29-18-21 (221)		26: 5:51 1:20:3 1:47:3 Graduate		50000 7 4 ³ / ₄ 4 ³ / ₄ 3 ⁰ / ₄ 3 ² / ₄ 3 ² / ₄		JaBartlett EnRobinsn		27 ³ 29		26 ² 26		1:49		108		+11 8w								
12 Jun26	4M1	wf82 ²	26 ⁴	:56	1:22:4	1:48:3	Graduate	50000	7	4 ³ / ₄	4 ³ / ₄	3 ⁰ / ₄	3 ² / ₄	3 ² / ₄	JaBartlett	EnRobinsn	27 ³ 29	26 ² 26	1:49	108	+11 8w	L*90	GGGrshprSwngtwnBmNnN	1st up, stallid, hid 3rd-9
30 May26	9Wbs	fst59 ⁹	26	:54	1:20:3	1:47:3	Graduate	72900	2	4 ³ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	1 ⁰ / ₄	3 ² / ₄	6 ⁵ / ₄	DoMcnair	DaMenary	26 ⁴ 27 ² 26 ² 28	1:48 ³ 117	+8 5w	L*106	AyeyCptrD FthnFivPrncHhv	Lst cvr, ch, fold-10		
17 May26	10FID	fst77 ⁷	27 ¹	:55	1:22:4	1:50	JURAVNSKI-G2	189435	2	4 ³ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ³ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	3 ¹ / ₄	DoMcnair	DaMenary	27 ⁴ 27 ³ 27 ³ 27 ¹	1:50:1 120	+5 7w	L*40	PrncHhv SugrMn BrnNnN	-		
10 May26	4FID	fst53 ³	26 ¹	:53	1:20:3	1:48:2	Juravinski	25550	3	2 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ² / ₄	1 ² / ₄	1 ² / ₄	DoMcnair	DaMenary	26 ¹ 27 ² 27 ² 27 ⁴	1:48:2 123	+5 7w	L*50	BrunNnN Fallout FthnFiv	-9		
2 May26	9Wbs	fst39 ⁹	26 ⁴	:54	1:21:4	1:48:4	Opn	29600	2	4 ³ / ₄	3 ³ / ₄	2 ³ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ³ / ₄	DoMcnair	DaMenary	27 ³ 27 ⁴ 26 ⁴ 26 ³	1:48:4 113	+8 9w	L*75	ClojckHhv BrnNnN ItsSatty	Unc, 2nd best-6		
11 Apr26	9Wbs	fst44 ⁴	26 ¹	:53	1:21	1:48:1	Opn	28800	6	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ⁰ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	DoMcnair	DaMenary	26 ² 27 ¹ 27 ³ 27	1:48:1 118	+8 5w	L*25	BrunNnN BrueHhv PdrSistr	Yld, pkt, ch, best-10		
4 Apr26	9Wbs	gd41 ¹	26 ²	:55	1:23:1	1:50	NEW HOLLAN	48600	2	1 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	1 ³ / ₄	1 ⁴ / ₄	1 ⁴ / ₄	DoMcnair	DaMenary	26 ² 29	27 ⁴ 26 ⁴	1:50 107	-1 6w	L*60	BrunNnN BlueHunt ArbgHhv	Down road, handy-7	
2 PAPIS PISTOL		b h 4, by Papi Rob Hanover, Bang Bang by Sweet Lou		Last 5 Sts - \$14,255		1:50.4 PHi 5/8		26 M1		1 0 0 0		\$0 26 Tot		5 1 0 1		\$14,255								
31:47.4 (1) \$2,851		S.C. DePinto Sor Lk, NJ, C. Arvanitis, Manalapan, NJ, B. Shackman, AB, R. I Horowitz, Scotch Plains, NJ		+1:47.4 M1		25 M1		0 2 0 3		-\$209,192 25 Tot		13 3 0 3		-\$221,715										
10-1 Br. Boyd 317-45-52-36 (142)		26: 5:51 1:20:3 1:46:4 Graduate		50000 6 1 ⁰ / ₄ 3 ² / ₄ 3 ³ / ₄ 4 4		Br. - Anthony Perretti Fm & J Davino, NJ, B. Shackman		24 M1		0 0 0 0		-\$159,925 Life		32 8 2 6		\$420,837								
12 Jun26	12M1	wf82 ²	26 ⁴	:53	1:20:1	1:46:4	Graduate	50000	6	1 ⁰ / ₄	3 ² / ₄	3 ³ / ₄	4	4	BrxBoyd	SaDePinto	26 ³ 27 ¹ 27	26 ³ 26	1:47:2 115	+11 8w	40.20	CptrOptm AyeyCptrDFllt	Ust pst 1/4, stll, no bid-8	
30 May26	9Wbs	fst59 ⁹	26	:54	1:20:3	1:47:3	Graduate	72900	7	2 ¹ / ₄	4 ³ / ₄	4 ⁵ / ₄	4 ³ / ₄	5 ¹ / ₄	JaBartlett	RoFellows	26 ¹ 28 ¹ 26 ² 26	1:48:3 112	+8 5w	L*106	AyeyCptrD FthnFivPrncHhv	Tok, shuff, ring-10		
17 May26	8Wbs	gd44 ⁴	25	:55	1:24:1	1:50:4	NW2800L4C	21600	1	5 ⁶ / ₄	5 ⁵ / ₄	5 ⁴ / ₄	2 ² / ₄	3 ¹ / ₄	LoRoy	RoFellows	27 ² 29 ³ 28 ² 26	1:51:1 101	+2 5w	10.50	RembrnThA WrtMARS PapisPstl	Cvr, outkicked-9		
16 May26	1Wbs	fst64 ⁴	26 ¹	:54	1:21:2	1:49:3	NW15000L4C	18980	2	2 ^{nk}	2 ^{hd}	3 ¹ / ₄	3 ¹ / ₄	3 ¹ / ₄	DoMcnair	RoFellows	26 ³ 27 ² 27 ⁴ 28 ⁴	1:50:1 103	+7 6w	L*35	RembrnThA CptrnFthn WaffleBlc	Yld, outkic, no bid-7		
10 May26	11PhIA	fst78 ⁸	26 ⁴	:55	1:22:4	1:50:4	NW15000	13000	4	2 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ² / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	GNaptnJr	SaDePinto	26 ⁴ 28 ² 27 ³ 28	1:50:4 102	+6 6w	L*20	PapisPstl PnthHhv BldnThWal	-8		
1 May26	1M1	fst56 ⁶	27 ⁴	:54	1:23:2	1:50:4	Qua	5	1 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	3 ¹ / ₄	JaBartlett	SaDePinto	27 ³ 27 ¹ 28 ³ 27 ³	1:51 1	-	no	CptrOptm Springhns PapisPstl	Ld, ovtrk, lane-5			
24 Apr26	12M1	fst63 ³	28 ³	:56	1:24:3	1:51:4	Qua	1	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	JaBartlett	SaDePinto	28 ⁴ 28 ¹ 27 ⁴ 27 ¹	1:52 2	-	no	CptrOptm Springhns PapisPstl	Pkt, even lane-5			
3 RAILROAD STATION (L)		b h 4, by Sweet Lou, Rodeo Rosie by Well Said		Last 5 Sts - \$23,000		1:51.3 YR		26 M1		2 0 0 0		\$4,750 26 Tot		6 1 2 0		\$23,450								
31:49.3 (5/6) Q \$3,900 LEX-SEL \$10,000		Burke Rog Sibs PA Hatfield Sibs OH Weaver Brusconi, PA, J&T Silva - Purnel&Libby, FL		+1:49.3 Mw 5/8		25 M1		0 0 0 0		-\$25 Tot		21 3 0 3		-\$271,715										
5-1 Y. Gingras 85-20-17-10 (235)		26: 5:51 1:20:1 1:46:4 Graduate		50000 4 6 ⁵ / ₄ 6 ⁶ / ₄ 5 ⁴ / ₄ 5 ⁴ / ₄ 4 ²		Br. - Eric K Good, MD		24 M1		0 3 0 3		-\$24,775 Life		41 7 14 6		\$369,267								
12 Jun26	12M1	wf82 ²	26 ⁴	:53	1:20:1	1:46:4	Graduate	50000	4	6 ⁵ / ₄	6 ⁶ / ₄	5 ⁴ / ₄	5 ⁴ / ₄	4 ²	YaGingras	RoBurke	27 ³ 27	26 ³ 26	1:47:1 114	+11 8w	L64.00	CptrOptm AyeyCptrDFllt	Inside, ang, stly-8	
6 Jun26	14M1	fst84 ⁴	28 ¹	:55	1:23:2	1:49:4	Qua	3	3 ³ / ₄	3 ³ / ₄	3 ² / ₄	3 ³ / ₄	3 ¹ / ₄	YaGingras	RoBurke	29	27	27 ⁴ 26 ⁴	1:50:3 79	+4 7w	59.00	CptrOptm SunnyStat RiroStion	3hole, no bid-4	
26 May26	8YR	fst77 ⁷	26 ⁴	:54	1:23:1	1:51:2	NW22001L5	25000	4	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	8ds	GeBrennan	RoBurke	26 ⁴ 28	28 ³ 33 ¹	1:56:3 79	+4 7w	L4.74	LtWlyVerduJabar	Ld, ovtrk, fr 3/4, trd-8	
19 May26	7YR	fst89 ⁹	27 ²	:55	1:24:1	1:51:3	NW16378L5	21000	6	2 ³ / ₄	4 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ³ / ₄	2 ³ / ₄	YaGingras	RoBurke	27 ³ 29 ² 27 ⁴ 27 ⁴	1:51:4 103	+8 4w	L4.22	VerduJabar RiroStion InvisBlN	Ld, yld, outkic, no bid-7		
12 May26	4YR	fst63 ³	27 ²	:55	1:23:4	1:51:3	HGV5BNM7	22000	3	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ² / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	YaGingras	RoBurke	27 ² 28 ² 28	27 ⁴ 1:51:3 106	+4 6w	L4.20	RiroStion FmrdFsh BetonTng	Ld, won, handy-7		
2 May26	4PcD	fst53 ³	26 ¹	:55	1:23	1:51	nw6800L5	11000	2	3 ² / ₄	3 ² / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	TyButer	RoBurke	26 ³ 29	27 ³ 28 ³	1:51:3 99	+2 6w	L*100	CarboneRiroStion NoTrspng	Chal, 2d best-6	
25 Apr26	10M1	slly44 ⁴	27 ¹	:56	1:25	1:51	NW10500L5	15000	2	3 ² / ₄	3 ² / ₄	4 ² / ₄	5 ¹ / ₄	5 ¹ / ₄	YaGingras	RoBurke	28 ¹ 28 ² 29	27 ³ 1:51:3 88	-8 5w	L5.60	MonsSBrYDwnbyWrt TyprnBarr	Rode rail, no bid-7		
4 FIFTH AND FIVE		b h 4, by Bettor's Delight, Flou Fly Fast by Allamerican Native		Last 5 Sts - \$38,366		1:49.2 Wbs 7/8		26 M1		1 0 0 0		\$0 26 Tot		6 0 1 2		\$37,153								
31:49.2 (7/8) \$6,192 LEX-SEL \$32,000		Pollack Racing LLC, Venetia, Pa		+1:49.2 Mw 5/8		25 M1		0 0 0 0		-\$25 Tot		18 7 0 4		-\$175,176										
10-1 S. Zeron 118-10-11-16 (085)		26: 5:51 1:20:1 1:46:4 Graduate		50000 3 5 ⁴ / ₄ 5 ⁴ / ₄ 6 ⁵ / ₄ 7 ⁴ / ₄ 6 ² / ₄		Br. - Darryl Kaplan, Toronto-Roy E Sproxtion-Harbhaj		24 M1		0 0 0 0		-\$39 Life		33 9 6 7		\$339,304								
12 Jun26	12M1	wf82 ²	26 ⁴	:53	1:20:1	1:46:4	Graduate	50000	3	5 ⁴ / ₄	5 ⁴ / ₄	6 ⁵ / ₄	7 ⁴ / ₄	6 ² / ₄	JaBartlett	EnRobinsn	27 ² 27	26 ⁴ 26	1:47:2 114	+11 8w	8.60	CptrOptm AyeyCptrDFllt	2nd ov, bad cvr, no bid-8	
30 May26	9Wbs	fst59 ⁹	26	:54	1:20:3	1:47:3	Graduate	72900	11	6 ¹ / ₄	6 ³ / ₄	6 ⁷ / ₄	5 ⁴ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	JaMacdnld	DaMenary	27 ² 28 ¹ 26 ² 26	1:48 115	+8 5w	29.40	AyeyCptrD FthnFivPrncHhv	3d ov, outkicked-10		
17 May26	10FID	fst77 ⁷	27 ¹	:55	1:22:4	1:50	JURAVNSKI-G2	189435	5	3 ¹ / ₄	4 ³ / ₄	5 ³ / ₄	5 ³ / ₄	4 ¹ / ₄	JaMacdnld	DaMenary	27 ³ 28 ¹ 27 ³ 26 ⁴	1:50:1 112	+2 5w	33.45	PrncHhv SugrMn BrnNnN	-9		
10 May26	4FID	fst53 ³	26 ¹	:53	1:20:3	1:48:2	Juravinski	25550	4	3 ² / ₄	3 ³ / ₄	3 ³ / ₄	3 ³ / ₄	3 ² / ₄	JaMacdnld	DaMenary	26 ³ 27 ¹ 27 ² 27 ⁴	1:49 118	+7 6w	15.05	BrunNnN Fallout FthnFiv	Ld, yld, outkic, no bid-7		
2 May26	8PcDA	fst54 ⁴	26 ⁴	:54	1:22:1	1:49:4	NW12500	16000	6	2 ¹ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	3 ¹ / ₄	3 ¹ / ₄	3 ³ / ₄	BrxBoyd	EnRobinsn	26 ⁴ 27 ⁴ 28	27 ⁴ 1:50:2 105	+2 6w	15.60	Manolete Booth FthnFiv	Tok, shif, unc, trd-7		
5 May26	8PcDA	slly42 ²	27	:56	1:24:2	1:51:4	WO 4-5YO	27500	5	6 ¹ / ₄	6 ³ / ₄	6 ³ / ₄	6 ² / ₄	6 ³ / ₄	DaPalone	EnRobinsn	28 ² 29	27 ⁴ 1:52:2 96	-6 9w	20.30	OdsWftrcOdsNlMntVengncBlc	Toured the track-6		
18 Apr26	17M1	fst65 ⁵	28 ³	:57	1:25:3	1:51:3	Qua	4	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	2 ^{no}	JaBartlett	EnRobinsn	28 ³ 28 ⁴ 28 ¹	26	1:51:3 88	-8 5w	L5.60	MonsSBrYDwnbyWrt TyprnBarr	Rode rail, no bid-7		
5 TWISTED DESTINY (L)		b h 4, by Bettor's Wish, Tug River Princess by Badlands Hanover		Last 5 Sts - \$26,625		1:50.1 Pw 5/8		26 M1		1 0 0 0		\$2,500 26 Tot		10 2 3 1		\$34,125								
31:48 (5/8) Q \$6,413		Let It Ride Sibs FL-Alberg Rog NJ, Enviro Sibs FL-Jesmeral Sibs NY		+1:48 Mw 5/8		25 M1		0 0 0 0		-\$25 Tot		17 7 5 3		-\$402,996										
4-																								

Odds On Mr Mamba lands at No. 1 in first 2026 Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown poll

Odds On Mr Mamba, fresh off his win in this past weekend's Pepsi North America Cup, found himself first again when the Week 1 edition of the 2026 Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown poll was released on Wednesday (June 17).

Odds On Mr Mamba is 3-for-3 this year after capturing the C\$1 million Grade 1 North America Cup at Woodbine Mohawk Park and leads all horses in North America in purses, with \$426,000. The 3-year-old male pacer received 29 of 35 first-place votes and totaled 343 points, giving him a 72-point cushion over No. 2-ranked Loua Dipa.

Loua Dipa, who won the Fan Hanover (G1) for 3-year-old filly pacers this past weekend at Mohawk in a Canadian-record 1:48 1/5, received two first-place votes and 271 points. Following Lou Dipa in spots 3 through 5 were Roses Are Red (G1) winner Miki And Minnie, Oak Grove Trotting Derby and Empire Breeders Classic champ Spencer Hanover, and North America Cup runner-up Brandon Blvd.

Ranked No. 6 was On To Norway, who received the poll's remaining four first-place votes after stretching his winning streak to 27 races with a 1:49 3/5 victory this past Friday in a division of the Graduate Series at the Meadowlands. The time, in On To Norway's fourth start of this season, was a world record for a 4-year-old gelding trotter.

Rounding out the Top 10 were Mohawk Gold Cup Invitational (G3) winner Ervin Hanover, New Jersey Sire Stakes champion Apex, North America Cup third-place finisher Beau Jangles, and Fan Hanover runner-up Be Perfect BG.

The Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown poll, which will continue weekly on Wednesdays through the Grand Circuit season, does not determine year-end awards. The members of the U.S. Harness Writers Association vote on all Dan Patch Award division winners plus Trotter of the Year, Pacer of the Year, and Horse of the Year.

Rankings based on the votes of harness racing media representatives on a 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis.

Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown Standardbred Poll: Week 1 – 6/17/2026

Rank/Name (1st)	Age/Sex/Gait	Record	Earnings	Points	Pvs
1-Odds On Mr Mamba (29)	3gp	3-3-0-0	\$426,000	343	--
2-Loua Dipa (2)	3fp	3-2-1-0	\$177,044	271	--
3-Miki And Minnie	4mp	3-2-0-1	\$139,800	211	--
4-Spencer Hanover	3ct	4-4-0-0	\$391,932	194	--
5-Brandon Blvd	3cp	4-2-2-0	\$271,580	128	--
6-On To Norway (4)	4gt	4-4-0-0	\$58,000	125	--
7-Ervin Hanover	6hp	2-2-0-0	\$50,400	99	--
8-Apex	3ct	2-1-1-0	\$118,750	73	--
9-Beau Jangles	3cp	5-3-0-2	\$189,593	64	--
10-Be Perfect BG	3fp	5-4-1-0	\$195,640	61	--

ALSO: Periculum, Super Chapter 40; Mossdale Ben N 36; Captain Albano 27; Antognoni S, Endurance 25; Prince Hal Hanover 24; Lexus Kody 18; Bourbonista S 17; Nezuko Kamado S, Tarapasta 16; Louies Girl N 14; Bookie J, Captain Optimistic 13; Lou Hill 10; Miss Jum Jabber 7; Neighver Punt 6; Oh Look Magic 4; Ken Hanover 3; Another C Note, Big Ranger 1.

-Ken Weingartner for Hambletonian Society

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 Help support the effort to preserve and celebrate harness racing's history by joining the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame
 Membership levels start at just \$35!
 Make your check payable to the Harness Racing Museum and mail to: 240 Main St., Goshen, NY 10924 or CLICK HERE to join online at: harnessmuseum.com

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, JUNE 18

RACE 5

(2) THEOBALD invades from Scioto in sharp form and gets significant post relief, especially off his last start out there. He also has winning experience at Yonkers in the past.

-Greg Reinhart



FRIDAY, JUNE 19

RACE 11

(6) NO BETTER AIR took a death shuffle when an extreme longshot stopped in front of her. She raced extremely well to somehow finish second despite that.

-Kevin Plowcha



RACE 9

(1) ROCK MY UNIVERSE put in a steady mile in his Harmon barn debut. Five-year-old has beaten much better here and could be very tough to beat if Harmon gets more out of him in start two.

-Derick Giwner



SATURDAY, JUNE 20

RACE 9

(1) WATER SPORTS TEEN comes off what looks like an awful performance. I'd argue that you should disregard that line since it was versus better in a crazy-fast 1:47 1/5 mile. This is a spot where he should shine.

-Giwner



FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis

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

Meadowlands Analysis

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

Yonkers Analysis

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

DHP PPS

HARNESS EYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

INSTANT RACING UPDATES VIA TWITTER: @DRFHARNES

NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

SARATOGA ANNOUNCES \$100K DONATION, MORE FOLLOWING BARN FIRE

In response to the devastating barn fire that occurred on Tuesday morning (June 15), Saratoga Casino Hotel announced Thursday (June 17) a coordinated response that includes a \$100,000 donation, upcoming fundraising efforts, and a memorial service to honor the horses lost in the tragedy.

A \$100,000 donation will be made to the Saratoga Harness Horsepersons Association to support horsemen, trainers, staff, and backstretch workers impacted by the fire.

"This contribution will be used to support those affected as they begin the long process of recovery in the aftermath of an unimaginable tragedy," said Henry Westbrook Jr, president of the Saratoga Harness Horsepersons Association. "We greatly appreciate the outpouring of support from the community and in particular this generous donation from Saratoga Casino Hotel."

In addition, Saratoga Casino Hotel will host fundraising opportunities throughout its Sunset Saturday Series, running from July 11 through August 29, to further support those impacted by the disaster. Information regarding the Sunset Saturday Series is available at [SaratogaCasino.com](https://www.saratogacasino.com).

Saratoga Casino Hotel is also planning a memorial service to honor the 17 horses lost in the fire. Details regarding the service will be announced in the coming days.

"Racing is the foundation of our company's history. My father and grandfather were in the harness racing industry, and for us this isn't just a business—it has been part of our family's livelihood for generations," said Sam Gerrity, Chief Executive Officer of Saratoga Casino Hotel. "Although our contribution cannot relieve the pain felt by those so closely impacted, we hope our efforts and support help ease the sorrow as they move forward."

Horses to Be Honored at Memorial Service: Arlanda, Conquest As, Crazy Jet, Five Star Lou, Free Willy Hanover, Gimlet Hanover, Influencer, Lyons Dukey, Muscle Dynasty, Our Father Lindy, Perfect Bang, Quite Like Me, Race Me Bombshell, Shalamar Hanover, Trackstar, Tropical Cyclone, and Red.

-release (Saratoga Casino Hotel)

SWITZER REACHES 4,000 WINS

Kevin Switzer, Jr kicked off a five-win day with a benchmark victory at Bangor Raceway on Wednesday (June 17), as the 38-year-old state-of-Maine native secured the 4000th driving win of his career.

The win came in stunning fashion as Switzer lit-the-board at 16-1 in the opening race of the day, weaving Neither Do I (2:01 3/5, \$34.40) to the wire from the dreaded eight-hole, confidently stretching the margin of victory to 1 1/2 lengths, while relishing his latest criterion credential.

[READ MORE](#)

SASSY BY THE SEA EYES 3-FOR-3 START IN OH SIRE STAKES

Winless in eight starts as a freshman, filly pacer Sassy By The Sea has drastically improved in her sophomore campaign. Three starts in, she's done nothing but win.

"She's been good this year," trainer Herman Hagerman said. "She's gotten better in each start, and I couldn't be any happier with her."

The daughter of Downbytheseaside out of Sassy Lady Art, Sassy By The Sea finished no better than third in 2025, doing so in the fourth leg of the Ohio Sires Stakes. She finished fifth in each of the other four legs and was sixth in the Ohio Breeders Championship and fourth in the OSS Gray Championship to close out the year.

[READ MORE](#)

EPIC NORTH AMERICA CUP SHOWDOWN CREATES NEW HANDLE RECORD

Odds On Mr Mamba's thrilling victory in the 43rd Pepsi North America Cup (G1) highlighted a tremendous 2026 event at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

The highly anticipated showdown between top 3-year-old pacers Odds On Mr Mamba, Brandon Blvd and Beau Jangles helped drive a North America Cup race record handle of \$687,448, topping the previous record of \$681,716 in 2015. The race handle was also up 25.5 percent over last year.

[READ MORE](#)

MANY OPTIONS FOR MEADOWLANDS PACE NIGHT DINING

There are plenty of dining options available for Saturday, July 11th – Meadowlands Pace Night – the track's signature night-time event.

• The Lounge

Center of the action with front row seat to Victory's giant screens. 2- and 4- top tables and bar seats available.

Ticket purchase acts as food and beverage credit for the Victory Sports Bar menu

• Outdoor Cafe Table

Table for 4 near the Winner's Circle

\$125 per table – price is a credit towards cafe food and drink purchase

To purchase, visit - <https://events.ticketleap.com/tickets/meadowlandsracetrack/pace-dining-2026>

Those looking for buffet dining can call 201-The-BigM to make reservations for the Pink Restaurant. The buffet is \$79.95 and features a variety of starters, including shrimp cocktail, deviled eggs, carbonara & artisanal bruschetta. Main course offerings include red miso-glazed prime rib, pork chop Peperonata, spinach & chicken white lasagna, and Dauphinoise potatoes. Reservations can be made by calling 201-The-BigM

Meadowlands Pace night features a stakes-filled card worth over \$2.5 million, with post time at 6:35 pm.

For all Pace night details, visit <https://playmeadowlands.com/pace/>
-edited release (Meadowlands)

OHHA HOSTING BURGERS & BABIES AT SCIOTO DOWNS ON JUNE 22

The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association is hosting a Burgers & Babies event on Monday, June 22, at Eldorado Scioto Downs.

Burgers & Babies is open to the public and will take place on the Scioto Downs patio from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. during the 2-year-old qualifiers. Hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, drinks, and race programs will be available.

Additionally, representatives will be present to answer questions for those interested in learning more about racehorse ownership.

June 22 also marks the final day to submit entries for the OHHA's 2026 Harness Racing Fantasy League. The OHHA will have entry forms available to fill out during the event. This year's Harness Racing Fantasy League features \$5,000 in total cash prizes, including a \$1,500 grand prize. The fantasy season runs from July 1 through Oct. 31. For more information, visit the Fantasy League page on the [OHHA website](#).

-release (OHHA)

CLEMENTS CRUSHING INAUGURAL BET ONTARIO HANDICAPPING CONTEST

Handicapper Ryan Clements not only is leading the inaugural Bet Ontario Handicapping Contest, he also has won each of the first two legs – May 29 during the Camluck Classic card at The Raceway at Western Fair District and June 13 during the Pepsi North America Cup card at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

Clements – also known as the man who gave the world the Catch Driver racing game app – led all 12 participants at Western Fair with a night-ending bankroll of \$102.80 – 30 cents better than runner-up Chris Ruddick. Clements then outdid himself on NA Cup Night against 42 other players, finishing with a bankroll of \$386 to put his seasonal total at \$488.80 through the second of six legs. In the second leg, Clements defeated runner-up Pierre Charette by \$141.45.

Winning both legs has already earned Clements \$1,000 in prize money.

The in-person contest, a collaboration between Ontario Racing, HPIbet.com and the Central Ontario Standardbred Association (COSA), features total prize money of \$10,000 and is being held during some of Ontario's biggest Standardbred events.

Each leg of the contest ([full details and standings here](#)) features \$1,000 in cash prizes – \$500 to the winner, followed by \$300 for second place and \$200 for third. Each participant starts with their own \$100 bankroll and plays that night's races at the host track with a tournament-specific HPIbet betting card. Other than only betting on the host track, participants must make at least three wagers and spend at least \$50 of their bankroll.

-edited release (Ontario Racing)