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

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

TRIP OF A LIFETIME



COURTESY GARNET BARNSDALE

On Gold Cup & Saucer night there are always people as far as the eye can see.



BARN TALK

By Garnet Barnsdale
[@gocashking](#)

"You have to get there!"
"You MUST go there!"

For years and years, friends, colleagues and horsemen have all said this to me countless times about the biggest race in the Canadian Maritimes – the Gold Cup & Saucer, which is held annually at Charlottetown Driving Park on Prince Edward Island.

I had always wanted to go, but for various reasons, like cost, vacation time availability, etc., I had never made it, and honestly thought I never would. But thankfully, due to some strange circumstances, I made it this year for the August 22 spectacular, and now I am going to be one of the faithful screaming from the rooftop: "YOU HAVE TO GET THERE!"

(Column aside: A really good time to get there would be next year for Old Home Week, when the World Driving Championship will be contested the night before the Gold Cup & Saucer).

The genesis of this trip was a simple phone call between my son Nicholas, more commonly known in the industry as "Ace", and our buddy Edison Hatter, the all-world media personality that has probably already done it all in harness racing even though he hasn't reached his 28th birthday yet.

When Ace finished the phone call and emerged from his bedroom, I asked him what Edison wanted. He mentioned a few trivial things that I honestly don't recall, followed by "and he mentioned a road trip to the Gold Cup & Saucer." I was like, "wait...what?" My initial thought after investigating the distance and discovering we were in for a 16-hour drive each way was that I was reluctant to go. That was until Ace said to me, "Ed says he will pick us up at home and do all the driving, and we can share all the costs." I took

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 3](#)



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PA/KY Eligible

Filly o/o Boudoir Hanover
Hunterton Farms

Hip 54 Dixie Highway
PA/KY Eligible

Colt o/o Kissin In The Sand
Kentuckiana Farms

Hip 65 May May
PA/FL Eligible

Colt o/o McSeaside
Alliance Bloodstock

Hip 75 Coast Guard
PA/KY Eligible

Colt o/o My Little Captain
Alliance Bloodstock

Day 2

Hip 147 Odds On Ascend
PA Eligible

Colt o/o Angelou
Anvil And Lace Farm

Hip 187 Rebel Deo
PA/KY Eligible

Colt o/o Miss LA
Preferred Equine

Hip 203 William Wallace
PA/KY Eligible

Colt o/o Darlinonthebeach
Alliance Bloodstock

Hip 231 Pseudonym
PA/KY Eligible

Filly o/o Flyme To The Moon
Alliance Bloodstock

Hip 285 Kramer
PA/KY Eligible

Colt o/o Max Contract
Hunterton Farms



THEY ARE ALL THE RIGHT SIZE. **I LIKE THAT THEY ALL HAVE GOOD SHOULDERS AND STRONG WITHERS.** HE WAS A BEAUTIFULLY BALANCED HORSE. NOTHING WAS OUT OF PLACE AND HE HAD NO WASTED MOTION.

BRETT PELLING ON THE FIRST YEARLINGS BY CONFEDERATE



CONFEDERATE

Sweet Lou-Geothermal, by A Rocknroll Dance
(1:46.1, \$2,074,054)



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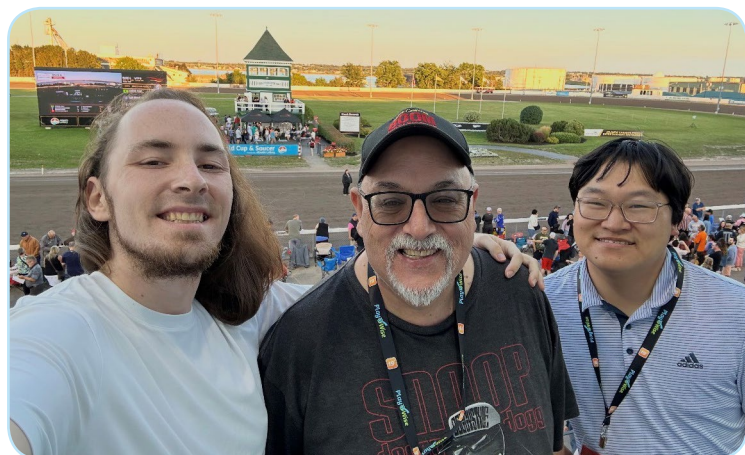
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a glance at my wife, and she gave an approving look, probably happy to get rid of me again not long after our annual Hambletonian trip. I was in! "LET'S GO!" I exclaimed. And so it began.

Edison might just have a screw loose for offering to drive from Maryland to Toronto to P.E.I., but I wasn't going to say no if all I had to do was sit in the backseat and not miss a beat while working on the Woodbine Mohawk Park Horseplayer's Journal.

We set out Wednesday morning (Aug. 19) with the goal of getting to the track for the Thursday-night card. We probably miscalculated how far we should go before stopping for the night, because we chose Moncton in New Brunswick, which was only two hours from our destination.

One of the highlights of Wednesday night's drive was watching (via livestream) Woodmere Rock It, a 2-year-old gelding that I own 10 percent of through TheStable.ca, race at Charlottetown Driving Park. He lined up behind the gate to race in the PEI Colt Stakes Gold with a perfect five-for-five record coming off a track-record breaking performance at Summerside Raceway. With The Stable's CEO Anthony Macdonald in the bike, Woodmere Rock It survived a first turn scare where he got steppey to smash the all-time Maritimes 2-year-old record and tie the Canadian record for a 2-year-old male pacer over a half-mile track, dominating his rivals in 1:52 4/5. His outstanding effort earned him three tenth-place votes in the weekly Hambletonian Society Top 10 poll. I can only speak for one of those votes. It was unfortunate I couldn't make it for the race, but I'm already booked for a return trip on Atlantic Breeders Crown night the first weekend in October.



COURTESY GARNET BARNSDALE

(left to right) Ace and Garnet Barnsdale with Edison Hatter.

After a few meal and rest breaks, combined with rain and traffic jams, we didn't arrive at our hotel in Moncton until just before 4 a.m., and when we tried to check in there seemed to be some confusion regarding our room. We followed the front desk host to our supposed lodgings, where she knocked on the door several times to make sure it was empty. To our surprise, and hers too, a middle-aged man opened the door. The hotel host seemed dumbfounded, and she blurted out, "hi, what is your name?" The poor dude in Room 415 replied "Will," and we all left.

The hotel room was in Edison's name, so he went back downstairs with the clerk and returned about 15 minutes later proclaiming, "They only had one room left, it's an upgrade to a Jacuzzi room." We entered the room and noticed it only had one bed and the Jacuzzi, and we all laughed and made several jokes that will stay in that room. Ed offered to sleep on the hard floor, mentioning that he "does it all the time." Ace and I shared the King bed. Ed ended up getting \$100 back for the room confusion, but all we could think about was that poor Will had as much if not more reason to be angry as we did.

Thursday morning came and I finished off a Journal before we headed out for the bridge to the island. We would have a couple of hours to kill before we could check into the home that we rented for the weekend. We made it onto the Island and decided to stop for some lunch. Islander MacDonald, who won the Gold Cup & Saucer in 2022 with Sintra, recommended Maid Marian's Diner, where they supposedly made the best steak

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



#82, SHADAZZLE, P, F
Shadow Play-Jenna's Delight-Bettor's Delight

NY Yearlings with 2026 Stakes-Winning Siblings Featured in 9/14 Goshen Sale Sale Starts at Noon

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#4, LIVE AMMO, T, C

Crazy Wow-Shes A Bronxbomber-Donato Hanover

- 1/2-brother to 2026 PA Sire Stakes Winner, **She's A Home Run**, 2, 1:53.2f -'26 (\$54,051)
- 1/2-brother to 2026 PA Stallion Series Winner, **Cocktail Captain**, 3, 1:55.4f -'26 (\$43,542)

#10, NINETYNINE BOTTLES, T, C, AGT.

Six Pack-Sing Me To Sleep-Conway Hall

- 1/2-brother to 2026 NY Excelsior Winner, **Fools Game**, 2, 1:59.2h -'26 (\$21,000)

#48, SUPER KICKS, T, F

Crazy Wow-Dancing Slippers-Angus Hall

- 1/2-sister to 2026 NY Fair Winner, **Two Step Trisha**, 2, Q2:07.3h -'26 (\$9,745)

#82, SHADAZZLE, P, F

Shadow Play-Jenna's Delight-Bettor's Delight

- 1/2-sister to 2026 NY Excelsior Winner, **Clear Choice**, p, 2, 1:53.2s -'26 (\$52,500)

#86, HAL SOLO, P, C

Courtly Choice-Lady Bubbles-Sportswriter

- 1/2-brother to 2026 Kin Pace Winner, **McBubbles**, p, 3, 1:50.4s -'26 (\$64,065)

#105, MOTHER MADE ME, T, F

Crazy Wow-Murderers Row-Donato Hanover

- 1/2-sister to 2026 PA Fair Winner, **Await Your Fate**, 3, 1:57.2f -'26 (\$22,912)

Yearlings are available for preview on Sunday (9/13) at the Mark Ford Training Center!

[Click to View Winbak Farm's 2026 Goshen Lineup!](#)

Joe & JoAnn Thomson, Owners / Jack Burke, General Manager

Noelle Duspiva, NY Manager / James Ladwig, Yearling Manager

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sandwich. I can tell you that the three of us all ordered it, and we agreed wholeheartedly — it was amazing! There are so many good places to eat on the island that I would need to write a separate column to feature all of them.

We arrived at the track for the Thursday night card and picked up some press passes that Red Shores Racing Manager Lee Drake had left for us at the entrance. We bet a few races, lost a few bucks, and hung out with Hall of Famer Wally Hennessey, who invited us all to watch the Gold Cup Parade from his house Friday morning. I didn't make it because I was busy working, but Ace and Ed did, and they said they had a great time and were treated with the famous island hospitality that we experienced everywhere we went. Debbie Little told us before we left that Islanders are the nicest people in the world. Everything that we experienced up to that point only confirmed that statement, and the trip still had plenty of meat remaining on the bone.

On Friday night, we took in the racing card, and I got to visit Woodmere Rock It on the backside, where I met fellow owner Trevor Frizell and his dad. I was happy to find out that my gelding is a sweetheart that likes attention.

Saturday morning, we were up early and excited not only because it was Gold Cup & Saucer day, but also because there was a double header starting at noon! We watched the afternoon program from various points on the track from where we could shoot videos and share them on social media, and we left a couple of races early to walk to a restaurant named Famous Peppers for dinner. Once again, both the food and service were tremendous.

When we returned to the racetrack, I walked into the casino because I knew they had self-serve betting machines and I wanted to punch a ticket on the Isle Pick 5 that began in race 1. Something compelled me to stop at the roulette table, where I threw \$20 down and asked for \$10 each on 6 and 10, my birthday (October 6). Edison foolishly bet \$50 on red, and I told him he was going to lose because 6 and 10 are both black numbers. Lo and behold, that little ball dropped right into number 10! I decided with part of my \$350 profit to add \$20 to the money we were going to play on that night's 50/50 draw. We had already committed to buying \$80 worth of tickets because we knew it would be a packed house and a big pot (more on that later).

Lee Drake couldn't have treated us any better that weekend, and it was a godsend that he provided us with seats in the Red Shores corporate box for that evening's card, because this 61-year-old body doesn't do too well packed in like a sardine at this stage of my life.

My good fortune continued in race two when I hit a \$10 Tri with 14-year-old Moonwriter on top. It paid an incredible \$70 for \$2, with the 5-2 winner over the 1-9 second choice over the third choice in a five-horse field.

As the night progressed, I remembered that I hadn't yet bought the 50/50 tickets, and I saw a seller walking on the apron below. When my good son Ace offered to go buy them, I obliged. Just as they were about to start the post parade for the Gold Cup & Saucer — which is itself a spectacle as they turn the place dark and spotlight each horse — they called the winning 50/50 number. Seven digits that I will never forget: 3...2...7...8...4...5.

We had five strips of eighty numbers and as expected, we didn't even get the 3 and 2 on any of the first four. For drama, I revealed the last ticket one number at a time starting from the left. First column of 40 numbers, nada. Now I say: "Come on, let us at least get the 3 and 2, which we do. This is gonna be interesting if we have the 7," I blurt out. There it is. At this point, astute Ace can see through to the last four numbers because I am covering one ticket with another and they are translucent. "WE GOT IT!" he exclaims, and I quickly reveal the 8, 8, 4 and 5. We yelled so loud that it created a murmur among the several thousand below us on the apron.

I was directed to a small wooden building to claim our prize and when I walked in there were four people counting stacks and stacks of money. I was told they needed more time. "No problem, I'll see you after the race, thank you," I replied.

The Gold Cup & Saucer itself was a thrilling renewal, with second choice Fifth And Five prevailing in a track-record equalling 1:49 4/5 for Jody Jamieson, who indicated in his post-race interview just how important this race is to Islanders. "I'm beside myself," Jamieson said in the winner's circle. "I literally can't believe I won the Gold Cup & Saucer. This is the culmination of a whole life of driving horses and being in the horse business. Everybody wants to win this race."

One person in the crowd that was almost as happy as the winning driver was Standardbred Canada President and CEO Darryl Kaplan, who bred the winner and watched the race with us. He initiated a round of high



COURTESY GARNET BARNSDALE

Garnet Barnsdale with Woodmere Rock It.

fives at the wire, then disappeared to head for the winner's circle. I also disappeared to go claim our 50/50 draw loot and I returned with \$14,940.

To cap our night and trip off, we were seen on the CTV National news across Canada in a brief shot celebrating after Moonwriter's win.

Needless to say, our trip back probably didn't seem as long as it might have if Edsion's Mercedes SUV wasn't loaded down with cash. We made a couple of casino stops on the way, won a little, lost a little, nothing consequential.

The lasting impression for me was the famous "Island hospitality." Debbie Little was right. From even before we arrived, with Lee Drake and his crew taking care of us, to Wally Hennessey opening up his home to us, to Woodmere Rock It's trainer Jamie Smith finding me a limited edition hat, we could not have been treated any better. It was one of the best road trips of my 61-year-long life, and of course leaving that island with close to 15 grand and owning a colt that tied a Canadian record sure didn't hurt.



9/18 OHIO JUG SALE

3 from Winbak Farm Sell in Spring Haven's Consignment

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#81, STARS WILL SHINE, T, C, OH
Ready For Moni-Galary Girl-Angus Hall

- Dam is a 1/2-sister to **Winbak Dream**, 1:56.4s (\$441,684)
- Dam is a 1/2-sister to **Ima Standup Guy**, 1:55.1f -'24 (\$191,774)

#150, LOBSTER MACNCHEESE, P, C, OH
Pebble Beach-Ms Mac N Cheese-Badlands Hanover

- Dam is **Ms Mac N Cheese**, p, 1:50.4s (\$651,383)
- Dam is a 1/2-sister to **Freeze Out**, p, 1:52h (\$431,676)

#217, GIRLS BEACH TRIP, P, F, OH
Pebble Beach-Smart Girl-Roll With Joe

- 1/2-sister to **Smart N Sassy**, p, 1:53f -'26 (\$129,509)
- Dam is a 1/2-sister to **Wisdom Tree**, p, 1:49.1s (\$687,376)

Click here for Winbak Farm's Ohio Jug Sale Videos!

Joe & JoAnn Thomson, Winbak Farm Owners

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Mixed Sale Average - \$55,184 (↑ 4.2%)
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← Hip 1613 KADENA - \$1,200,000
Hip 1199 FRENCH CHAMPAGNE - \$1,150,000
Hip 1198 FRENCH CAFE - \$1,000,000
Hip 1209 PARISIAN CHARM - \$1,000,000
Hip 1605 DATE NIGHT - \$985,000
Hip 1175 FASHION SCHOONER - \$700,000
Hip 1581 RODEO DRIVE DEO - \$650,000
Hip 1630 WHAT A BID HANOVER - \$650,000

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Apex looks to rebound in \$250K NJ Classic at The Meadowlands

By Jay Bergman

Friday's extraordinary Meadowlands program includes four \$250,000 New Jersey Classic finals on the trotting side with Hambletonian winner Apex headlining the event for 3-year-old male trotters and looking to bounce back from a surprising fourth-place finish in last Friday's (September 4) elimination. Trainer Marcus Melander couldn't put his finger on exactly what led to the sub-par performance but indicated he expected better this week.

"I really don't know what happened. He wasn't sick," Melander said. "I trained him this morning (Tuesday) and he trained great so I'm expecting him to race well."

Apex hadn't raced in four weeks since his epic performance capturing the \$1 million Hambletonian on August 8 in a record-setting 1:49 2/5 clocking. The son of Walner finished off the board for only the second time in his 15-race career that includes 10 wins. Apex landed post six with Dexter Dunn at the controls in Friday's ninth race and is likely to be the heavy favorite despite his lackluster performance in the trials.

Melander has a solid one-two punch with Nix Nacken (post 5) alongside his stablemate behind the starting car. Nix Nacken captured the second elimination with Dunn aboard and picks up Scott Zeron for the big money on Friday.

"He's been a solid horse all year," said Melander of the Muscle Hill-sired gelding that posted a 1:50 mile at The Meadowlands earlier this season and enters the New Jersey Classic riding a two-race win streak.

While the Melander-trained duel appears to be the class of the field, they face a solid group, with elimination upsetter King Of The Wind (post 2) and the gutsy Magic Punk (post 1) filling the inside part of the gate. Diabolic Hill (post 3) is the second-richest horse in the race having earned \$727K in his career, but the Annie Stoebe-trained colt has not won a race this year in seven starts.

The \$250,000 New Jersey Classic for 2-year-old male trotters (race 7) looks like one of the best races on the card and Melander has a pair in the race that only drew nine starters. Free Scottie (post 2) captured the lone \$25,000 elimination on September 4, his first win of the year.

"The hoppers helped for sure," said Melander of the equipment addition that kept the son of Walner safe for Dexter Dunn to drive.

Free Scottie was a solid closing second in a William Wellwood elimination at Woodbine Mohawk Park on August 21 but made a break in the final.

Melander will also send out Pul Biber (post 7) but conceded that the Muscle Hill-sired colt would do well to get a check against this company.

Trainer Jim Campbell scored one of his biggest career wins in 2022 when Cool Papa Bell captured the Hambletonian. Campbell looks to have another promising male trotter for Scott Farber's Runthettable Stables in the homebred Wrong Sounds Right, a winner in three of his five freshman starts and a top contender in this division.

"I trained his dam (Broadway Jo Ell)," said Campbell about the dam who produced three foals before Wrong Sounds Right, including a pair of six-figure earners. Campbell had trained the others and noticed the difference early on. "He was the best-bodied of her foals and did everything right training down."

A 1:53 1/5 winner in a division of the Garden State Stakes at The Meadowlands on August 21, Wrong Sounds Right skipped the elimination, but Campbell is confident he'll be ready for the contest.

"We had the option to take a bye," said Campbell. "I talked it over with Scott and we agreed. He was sharp and didn't need the race."

Obviously limiting the number of starts on any 2-year-old is crucial, especially if the connections have long-term plans. "He's eligible to the two weeks of Grand Circuit at The Red Mile," said Campbell, "And the Breeders Crown as well."

Those Grand Circuit goals will have to wait for now, but Friday's contest should be a useful measuring stick for Wrong Sounds Right as he tries to gain some measure of revenge against Lifetime Dreamer (post 3), a gelding from the first crop of Ecurie D. Lifetime Dreamer put in an epic performance on Hambletonian Day for trainer Ake Svanstedt and driver Yannick Gingras, capturing the \$180,000 New Jersey Sire Stakes Platinum final in 1:51 1/5. In his first race since, he was a decent third behind Free Scottie in the elimination race and should benefit from the work heading into Friday's rich event. Svanstedt has three others in the field, with Kindergarten leg winner Lincoln Kronos (post 1) inside stablemates Easy Down Blonde (post 8) and Bentley Blue Chip (post 9).

In addition to the New Jersey Classics on Friday night, The Meadowlands has a solid feature in the Girl Power, a \$188,200 contest for trotting mares with a field of nine slated for race 10. Melander sounded optimistic that Tactical Moni (post 2) was moving in the right direction heading into the Girl Power.

"We've only had her for three starts," said Melander. "She hadn't raced in four weeks before last week's race, so I expect her to be better."

Tactical Moni was a solid second behind Walspea in the Steele Memorial on Hambletonian Day then returned on September 4 to finish third behind that mare in a division of the Miss Versatility.

Walspea looks for another major stakes win for trainer Trond Smedshammer but will have to overcome post nine in the draw. Walspea controlled the pace kindly for Yannick Gingras in the Miss Versatility, gaining control of the field before the half and sprinting the final four furlongs in 54 2/5 to seal the victory.

The Girl Power has attracted last year's Hambletonian Oaks champion Conversano (post 1) as well as the 2024 Oaks winner Warrawee Michelle (post 7), but both are still in search of their first 2026 victories. Yo Tillie (post 3) returns after racing the boys in the Maple Leaf on September 5 at Woodbine Mohawk Park and looks to regain her winning ways.

The Meadowlands 14-race Friday program has a first post listed for 6:20 p.m.



WALTER WLODARCZYK PHOTO

Marcus Melander was able to raise the Hambletonian trophy after Apex won on August 8.



Winbak Farm

Congratulates

ASHLEE'S CHOICE

WINNER OF \$25,000 NY COUNTY FAIR FINAL IN 1:58.2 AT GOSHEN!

Courtly Choice-Ashlee's Way-Western Hanover p, 2, 1:58.2h -'26 (\$25,815)

Trainer: Robert Anderson
Driver: Kyle Cummings
Owners: Robert Anderson & Pamela Schieber

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London Classic #65, EXTRA SHARP, is a Betterthancheddar 1/2-sister!

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MISSION READY



Featured first yearlings by
TACTICAL APPROACH at the
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Day 1

Hip 10 Tallulah Blu
PA/KY Eligible
Filly o/o Sadie Hanover
Crawford Farms

Hip 19 Earth Shaking
PA Eligible
Colt o/o Blonde Bombshell
Cameo Hills Farm

Day 2

Hip 177 Third Shot Drop
PA Eligible
Filly o/o Brickhouse Babe filly
Cameo Hills Farm

Hip 304 Training Season
PA/KY Eligible
Colt o/o Nixie Volo
Kentuckiana Farms

Hip 386 Rightdown Broadway
PA Eligible
Colt o/o Venerable
Cameo Hills Farm

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Carl Erskine Trot

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It is hard to believe that it's yearling time already. The Goshen Yearling sale, which has become the "kickoff" yearling event up at Mark Ford's training center in Middletown, New York, gets us started on September 14.



ON THE MARK - GOSHEN PREVIEW

By Bob Marks

Following a quartet of OUTS, 126 of the original 130 yearlings from the catalogue remain. They are from nationally known consignors like Blue Chip Farms, Cameo Hills Farm, Eric Taddeo, Leatherstocking Equine, Silver Tradition, Sunrise Farm, and Winbak Farm.

A good number of the leading sires are represented, as are familiar New York and Northeastern stallions. Let's look at a few that stand out for me:

HIP 6 PAPI DON'T PREACH **Papi Rob Hanover-She's Allright**

It's the only Papi Rob Hanover in the sale, which guarantees plenty of attention. The Sweet Lou dam has a fast record and is from a family with abundant success with Sweet Lou. The full sister is racing and there will be many pulling him out of a stall for a look-see.

HIP 16 YUMYUM EAT EM UP **Cannibal-Sweet Chaos**

Cannibal is an accomplished son of current leading sire Sweet Lou and his first-croppers will be well scrutinized. The dam had ability and there's black type all over the page.

HIP 27 KNICKS GO **Cannibal-Wet Your Whistle**

Here's one for the New York Knicks fans. It's a Cannibal, himself from a family of successful stallions, stemming from second dam Arterra. The dam showed speed and look at her maternal family through Glowing Report!

HIP 35 ARI'S CANNONBALL **Cannibal-Arianna Grandeo**

Another Cannibal from a strong maternal family going back to Must See, the dam of stallion former Pacer of the Year Well Said, among other notables.

HIP 66 WOWWHATAFLIRT **Crazy Wow-Flirtinwiththehelp**

Crazy Wow gets them there, and here he can work with a sister to the well-remembered Market Share, whose accomplishments take up a good

percentage of the catalog page. If you want a horse that could deliver for years to come, this could be your gal, as many of the Crazy Wow's get better with age, with Chapercraz (\$1.1 million) a prime example.

HIP 69 CORNELL QUEEN **So Surreal-Hailey's Sister**

The dam is a sister to perennial New York siring mainstay Huntsville, and the sire So Surreal provides the Somebeachsomewhere blood that produced Huntsville. The Cornell Queen will have her lookers for Cameo Hills.

HIP 76 SPECIAL EDITION **Shadow Play-I'm Just Special**

It's a Shadow Play, the sire of World Champion Bulldog Hanover, and while we may or may not quite get Bulldog's speed, we should get a race-horse given the production records of the two dams on the catalog page.

HIP 98 CHERIE BLUE CHIP **Cannibal-Major Houlihan**

A Cannibal from a strong maternal family, and taking away Bulldog Hanover from the third dam, there's enough to garner plenty of attention. Her lone sibling Barracuda Bluechip showed speed, and you get Massachusetts eligibility in addition to New York.

HIP 122 SHAYNA **Six Pack-In Your Dreams Deo**

A Six Pack filly from a notable maternal family via third dam Bold Dreamer, whose accomplishments take up most of the catalog page. Shayna is New York sired and eligible, but Six Pack has made plenty of noise nationally with Nordic Catcher a recent Hambletonian winner.

HIP 128 BIGSEXY **So Surreal-America Ferrera**

True to his Somebeachsomewhere paternal heritage, So Surreal gets his share of winners, including a world champion in daughter Racine Bell. The maternal line is fine going back to the super-productive third dam Leslie Hanover.

The Goshen Yearling Sale figures to be a good one as it offers the most horses since 2016 when 152 were put up for bids. It is also the first indicator of what we can expect the market to look like in 2026.



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Heston Blue Chip-Place Your Best-Cambest
p, 2, 1:54.4f; 3, 1:52s; 1:46.1 -'26 (\$436,459)

Trainer: Joe Bongiorno

Driver: Tim Tetrick

Owner: El Dorado Stables

Breeder: Winbak Farm



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JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [X BergmanJay](#)

Gregory eyes top prize in three NY Sire Stakes finals at Yonkers Raceway

The New York Sire Stakes circuit has been a regular staple of Jeff Gregory's existence for over 20 years. As one of the leading drivers in the Empire State, Gregory would routinely travel from track to track and pick up high-level catch-drives. His ability to handle trotters as adeptly as pacers made him the go-to guy no matter what age, gait or sex.

In recent years Gregory has moved away from a workload that is heavy in driving and concentrated on a small stable based at Vernon Downs. While his New York-sired horses campaigned on the Sire Stakes, he would often find himself in the bike of other leading contenders. On Saturday, Gregory finds himself in a rather different position and one he's never had before. With eight \$300,000 New York Sire Stakes championships on the line at Yonkers Raceway, Gregory has three from his stable of just five horses in contention for the big money.

"I've definitely driven more than three horses on these days," Gregory said of the traditional New York Night of Champions that has been converted to the afternoon to accommodate the \$1 million MGM International Trot on the 11-race program that commences just before noon.

Just reaching the Sire Stakes final these days requires a horse that is versatile enough to race over a multitude of track sizes. In the case of young trotters, it often requires horses maintain their gait going around tight turns while still learning the ropes of racing. Gregory has mastered the art having his horses earning while learning and it's that kind of approach that has landed him three coveted spots in a short list of horses reaching Saturday's biggest prize.

Gregory and owner Steve Finkelstein (Jesmeral Stable) were fortunate enough to purchase Highway Six late during his 2-year-old campaign. "They were racing him on the New York Fair Circuit," said Gregory, speaking about Highway Six. "I got to drive him in his last two starts as a 2-year-old and thought he was a horse that could definitely race against Sire Stakes company."

A winner in six of his seven starts as a freshman, Highway Six is out of the Cash Hall-sired mare Highway Cash, herself a 19-time winner on the racetrack. Highway Cash is a half-sister to a pair of quarter-million dollar winners, with both Darron Hall and J A T O combining for an astonishing 84 career victories.

For Gregory as a sophomore, Highway Six has been consistent and competitive, winning in three of his nine starts and finishing on the board in four others. Highway Six enters Saturday's second race with earnings this year already in excess of \$102K and a chance to add to that significantly.

"There's a lot of nice horses in the field," said Gregory about the second race starters. "Ake's (Svanstedt) horse (Read The Room) can leave like a runner. You have AI in there and he's got a lot of class. Noel's (Daley) horse Chapter Geo J has been solid as well."

On the positive side for Gregory is that Highway Six landed the pole position and can leave the gate.

"He should be able to work out a trip and hopefully be right there on the wire," said Gregory, who sees a bright future for a horse that has but 16 career starts heading into Saturday.

"I definitely think he's a future Open Trotter at Yonkers," added Gregory, who with his years of experience would certainly know what it takes to succeed at that level. "I'm sure that's what Steve (Finkelstein) would want."

Post position is key in this division and Highway Six finds contenders

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 10](#)



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ASHLEE'S CHOICE: 2YO FILLY PACE

Courtly Choice-Ashlee's Way-Western Hanover

p, 2, 1:58.2h -'26 (\$25,815)

Trainer: Robert Anderson / **Driver:** Kyle Cummings

Owners: Robert Anderson & Pamela Schieber

Breeder: Winbak Farm

ATOMIC PROMISE: 2YO COLT TROT

Met's Hall-Promising Diva-Broad Bahn

2, 2:03.4h -'26 (\$32,715)

Trainer: James Rothfuss / **Driver:** Wade Tomaszewski

Owners: James Rothfuss & Lowerys Stable

Breeder: Winbak Farm

Second Place Finisher: Yippee Ki Yay (Met's Hall)

BRAVE WARRIOR: 3YO COLT PACE

Courtly Choice-Amazing Control-Shadow Play

p, 3, 1:55f -'26 (\$57,543)

Trainer: D Benny Eggers / **Driver:** Jim Devaux

Owners: D Benny Eggers & Mary Abbot

Breeder: Winbak Farm

DOUBLE STACK: 2YO FILLY TROT

Met's Hall-Highway Cash-Cash Hall

2, 2:06h -'26 (\$25,905)

Trainer: Margaret Butler / **Driver:** Kyle Cummings

Owners/Breeders: Margaret Butler & Amy Butler

Second Place Finisher: Maggie's Song (Met's Hall)

HARRY'S BOY: 3YO COLT TROT

Met's Hall-Ms Paige-Andover Hall

3, 2:01.2h -'26 (\$36,221)

Trainer/Owner: Tammy Cummings

Driver: Todd Cummings / **Breeder:** Winbak Farm

MET'S TOUR: 3YO FILLY TROT

Met's Hall-Tourin The Town-Glidemaster

3, 2:00.2h -'26 (\$41,719)

Trainer: James Rothfuss / **Driver:** Wade Tomaszewski

Owners: Out In The Country Stable,

Daniel Tybor Jr & James Rothfuss

Breeder: Winbak Farm

Second Place Finisher: Divine Melody (Met's Hall)

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Chapter Geo J and Read The Room with posts six and eight, respectively. Waxy Xavie is another by Met's Hall, she a 2-year-old filly that has yet to win in six starts but has stayed trotting for Gregory and is one of only seven that declared for the \$300,000 New York Sire Stakes final for freshman trotting fillies (race 4). Waxy Xavie drew post three and could be in line for a decent check.

"It's a good draw but Ake's filly (Kountry Plunge) is so much better than the others. She's not only the best in New York but I think she may be the best in the country," said Gregory of the Chapter Seven-sired Kountry Plunge, a \$200,000 purchase at the Lexington Selected Sale last fall that is the second foal from the 1:49 4/5 winning Plunge Blue Chip.

Kountry Plunge has won all four of her starts this year including a 1:55 2/5 breeze over the half-mile track at Saratoga on August 18. More recently, Kountry Plunge was an open-lengths winner in a single Sire Stakes division at Vernon Downs on September 4, padding her first-year bankroll to \$127K.



FRED BROWN PHOTO

Surreal Spirit will need to overcome post seven if she is to win the \$300,000 sophomore pacing filly final.

On the pacing side, Gregory has the right horse in the wrong spot for the sophomore filly pacing final (race 9) as Surreal Spirit landed post seven and will need some racing luck.

"It's tough from out there no matter how good you are," said Gregory bluntly about the draw.

Though Surreal Spirit exhibited 25-second first quarter speed in a New York Sire Stakes event at Vernon this August, Gregory recognized that came over a long straight path to the first turn.

"She's a big strong filly that has been racing well all season," said Gregory of Surreal Spirit, who was just a \$13,500 yearling purchase at Goshen in 2024 and has now earned \$222K during two seasons racing primarily on the New York Sire Stakes circuit. On the positive side for Gregory is that Surreal Spirit did in fact win at Yonkers in a leg of the Sire Stakes on August 6. On the board in nine of her 10 starts this year, Surreal Spirit is one of two fillies with the identical pedigree that are major contenders on Saturday.

"Her sister's quite a nice filly too," said Gregory of Cowboy Candy, the 2-1 favorite in the Sire Stakes final for freshman pacing fillies. Like her older sister, Cowboy Candy was unlucky in the draw landing post eight in Saturday's fifth race.

In addition to the three he's racing on Saturday, Gregory is looking forward to racing a Muscle Hill-sired freshman filly in the coming months at Plainridge.

"Nanny's Ce Ce is a filly I won with at Vernon a few weeks back," said Gregory. "I'm pointing her towards the Massachusetts Sire Stakes races."

Gregory had been tinkering with Nanny's Ce Ce's equipment in qualifiers and the homebred has made significant progress over the last month. Her dam Bomb Hugger was a New York Sire Stakes finalist as a 2- and 3-year-old in 2021-22.



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**Met's Hall-Promising Diva-Broad Bahn
2, 2:03.4h -'26 (\$32,715)**

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Driver: Wade Tomaszewski

Owners: James Rothfuss & Lowerys Stable

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WINNER OF \$25,000 NY COUNTY FAIR FINAL IN 1:56.1 AT GOSHEN!

**Courtly Choice-Amazing Control-Shadow Play
p, 3, 1:55f -'26 (\$57,543)**

Trainer: D Benny Eggers

Driver: Jim Devaux

Owners: D Benny Eggers & Mary Abbot

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Grade 1 MGM Yonkers International Trot has worldwide appeal

By Ken Weingartner

Daniel Wäjersten and Björn Goop are among the Europeans to have participated in the MGM Yonkers International Trot in the past, and they are happy to once again be part of its present.

Wäjersten will send out two horses in Saturday's \$1 million Grade 1 MGM Yonkers International Trot, to be contested at 1-1/4 miles at MGM Yonkers Raceway – Gio Cash (representing Germany) and Mellby Jinx (Sweden). Wäjersten drove Gio Cash in last year's International Trot, getting a pocket trip behind eventual winner Lexus Kody, but lacked room in the stretch and finished fourth.

This year, the Swedish trainer/driver will hand Gio Cash's lines to driver Robin Bakker. Wäjersten will be in the sulky behind Mellby Jinx.

"We're very happy to be a part of the day," Wäjersten said. "It's good money, and you represent your country, so it's very big to get invited and be a part of this race."

Goop is the trainer/driver of Betting Pacer (Sweden). The Swede drove in three previous editions of the International Trot, finishing second with Timoko in 2015 and third with Ideal San Leandro in 2024 and Powwow in 2025.

"It's always exciting to be back in the States," said Goop, whose previous trips to the U.S. also included competing in the 2011 World Driving Championship, where he finished fifth. "It's always like a dream come true to come over and race. Of course, this time I'm bringing my own trained horse, so it is very special."

Betting Pacer, who heads to the International Trot off a win in the Grade 1 European Championship for Mares at Solvalla on Aug. 19, will leave from post 10 in Saturday's 10-horse field and is 10-1 on the morning line. Post 10, as well as 9, are in the second tier.

"She's doing good," Goop said. "She's not used to making such a new trip. She's used to being out in the paddock and now she's been stabled all the time, so it's a big change for her, but she's been improving all week. We're happy with her. We're not happy with the (post) but what can we do. There is nothing we can do. We just have to hope for a little bit of luck and hope that she performs as she has been doing."

Betting Pacer, a 9-year-old daughter of Maharajah-Peignoir, has won 20 of 88 career races and earned \$693,586. Since the beginning of 2024, she has posted 12 victories and banked \$503,882. She is owned by MBG I Sydost AB.

"She's been racing really, really good for over a year," Goop said. "She's been against the boys many times. She's had a little bit of bad luck sometimes with post numbers but has been close to beating them several times. She was really good in the European Championship for Mares. She did an incredibly good race, came three wide, with a strong last quarter. After that, we've been trying to get her ready for this event."

Goop does not expect Betting Pacer to have difficulty negotiating Yonkers' half-mile oval because the mare set a world record in a long-distance race on a half-mile track a couple years ago.

"I have no concerns at all," Goop said.

As for Wäjersten's duo, Gio Cash will leave from post 2 and is 15-1 on the morning line while Mellby Jinx will start from post 6 and is 12-1.

Gio Cash, a 7-year-old son of Victor Gio IT-Give Me Love DE, has a Grade 2 win to his credit this year, in the Arjängs Stora Sprinter in Sweden in July, and four lifetime Grade 1 victories. For his career, he has won 17 of 38 races and earned \$799,150. He is owned by Carpe Diem Stables.

"I think he's in the same shape as last year, so we're hoping for a good performance," Wäjersten said. "He's fast and he's strong and, in my opinion, he's one of the best horses at short distance in Europe. He's got good potential."

Mellby Jinx, an 8-year-old son of Ready Cash-Heaven's Door, has won 15 of 67 career races and earned \$1.25 million for breeder/owner Mellby Gard Inc. He has four Grade 1 wins lifetime and won an Elitlopp elimination in 2025. In July, he was third behind Allegiant in her track-record 1:49 2/5 victory in the Grade 1 Hugo Åbergs Memorial at Jägersro, Sweden.

"I think they (Gio Cash and Mellby Jinx) are at the same level," Wäjersten said. "(Mellby Jinx) is 8 now, but I think he's as good as he was as a 6- and 7-year-old. He's earned good money and done some really good races."

"He's a very calm horse, very professional. He's been racing at a top level for three years now. We hope that a smaller track will be good for him, but you never know. He's never been on a half-mile track."

The 7-5 morning-line favorite in the International Trot is Super Chapter, from the stable of Marcus Melander, who will represent the United States. The 4-year-old son of Chapter Seven-Lifetime Pursuit posted a 1:49 3/5 win in the Grade 1 Maple Leaf Trot this past Saturday at Woodbine Mohawk Park, and he won his elimination the previous week in 1:49.4. He captured the Grade 1 John Cashman Memorial on Aug. 8 at the Meadowlands.

A Dan Patch Award winner last year, Super Chapter has won 19 of 32 career races and earned \$2.32 million. He is owned by Jeff Snyder, Arthur Pronti, and Hanover Shoe Farms. Dexter Dunn will handle the driving on Saturday, starting from post 5.

"He was fantastic last week and he came out of the race good," Melander said. "It's going to be (racing) three weeks in a row, but he's so good at taking care of himself – he eats well, drinks good – that he should be fine."

"It's always hard to compare the European horses, but I'm confident in my horse. Of course, it's a 10-horse field, it's a mile and a quarter, and it's a lot of drivers that have a different style in the way they drive over there. You're going to need some racing luck, obviously, as well, but in the horse, I'm always confident. He's going to be racing against some other nice horses, but you never know how they'll take the trip over here from Europe. It's going to be an interesting race."

Melander also will send out the Bourbonista S, a 5-year-old mare who is the 2-1 second choice on the morning line. She became the fastest female trotter in North American history with a 1:48 4/5 win in the Grade 3 Six Pack on July 4 at the Meadowlands and also won the Grade 2 Armbro Flight, at Mohawk, in June. The Swedish-bred daughter of Face Time Bourbon-Affinity Kronos is owned by Deo Volente Farms and Panamera Racing and will represent Sweden in the International Trot.

Bourbonista S qualified in 1:52 3/5 this past Friday at the Meadowlands, finishing fourth with Scott Zeron in the sulky. Zeron will be back with her on Saturday, leaving from post 4.

"The qualifier was good, just what she needed, a little tightener for this week," Melander said. "She qualified with shoes and just her training gear on. She's a lot better when we pull the shoes and change some equipment."

"She will go barefoot (Saturday). Super Chapter will race with shoes. We've pulled them twice and it seems like he's as good with shoes as he is barefoot."

Racing begins at 11:50 a.m. (EDT) on Saturday at MGM Yonkers Raceway. The 11-race card also includes the \$200,000 Grade 2 Bob Miecuna Invitational Trot, \$200,000 Grade 2 Aria Invitational Pace, and eight \$300,000 New York Sire Stakes championships. The MGM Yonkers International Trot is race 8.



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'Norway' aims to be king of the 'Hill'

On To Norway is ready to get back on the road again.

After making his past three starts at Harrah's Hoosier Park, where he was an Indiana Sire Stakes champion last season, the 4-year-old returns to the Grand Circuit for Saturday's (Sept. 12) \$250,000 Grade 2 Charlie Hill Memorial, for older trotters, at Eldorado Scioto Downs. The Hill is part of the Ohio Super Night card, which also includes the \$260,000 Grade 2 Jim Ewart Memorial Pace and eight Ohio Sire Stakes championships.

On To Norway has won 32 of 33 races dating back to April 2025 and brings a five-race win streak to the Hill Memorial. Those victories include the Grade 1 Hambletonian Maturity on July 11 and the Grade 2 Graduate Series final on July 4, both at the Meadowlands in New Jersey. His Graduate triumph came in 1:48 3/5, the fastest mile ever trotted in North America.

Since the Hambletonian Maturity, he has won the Open at Hoosier Park on Aug. 8 and Sept. 5, with a victory in the first leg of the Indiana Sire Stakes for older trotters between those races on Aug. 21.

On Saturday at Scioto Downs, On To Norway will leave from post 2 in a field of seven, with Yannick Gingras driving for trainer Ron Burke. The son of Muscle Massive-One Class Act is the 2-1 morning-line favorite.

"He looked really good the other day," co-owner Frank Baldachino said, referring to On To Norway's one-length win on Sept. 5, which followed a nose victory in the Indiana Sire Stakes event. "He was a little sick the previous start. Last week, he came back pretty authoritatively and won pretty handy the way he usually does. He's coming into the Hill in top form, and we drew well, so we're expecting a top-flight performance from him."

Although On To Norway has faced older horses this season in his Hoosier Park starts, the Hill will be his first time facing older rivals in open stakes action as the Graduate Series and Hambletonian Maturity were restricted to 4-year-olds.

"This season couldn't have gone any better so far," Baldachino said. "He's danced all the dances that we've had for him so far. The Charlie Hill is the next steppingstone. He's been beating older horses in Indiana that are no slouches, but not to this level of competition in the older ranks. This will be his first big test against older horses, and I expect he'll do well."

On To Norway's wins in the Hambletonian Maturity and Graduate final

both came by a neck over Super Chapter, who has since gone on to capture two Grade 1 stakes against older foes, the John Cashman Memorial on Aug. 8 at the Meadowlands and the Maple Leaf Trot on Sept. 5 at Woodbine Mohawk Park. On To Norway was not staked to either event. Super Chapter's next start is Saturday in the Grade 1 MGM Yonkers International Trot.

"Super Chapter is a super horse," Baldachino said. "And he had the momentum down the lane like he was going to go by Norway in both their races, and Norway just kicked it into another gear when he moved up to him and was drawing away at the wire. That's his greatest attribute – he just does not want to lose – and that's been reinforced against the best competition in North America as a 4-year-old."

"I don't care what horse you are, to stay sharp and go these types of miles against these types of horses, week in and week out, for almost a year and a half now, he's a pretty incredible animal. We don't take him for granted. We appreciate him 100 percent. We're all looking forward to him going again Saturday."

Baldachino owns On To Norway with the Burke Racing Stable, Black And White Stable, and Michael Rosenthal. On To Norway has nine wins and a second-place finish in 10 races this year and 36 victories in 43 career starts. He has earned \$1.08 million.

Saturday's Hill Memorial field also includes last year's winner, 9-year-old Hillexotic, as well as Emoticon Legacy, a 2025 O'Brien Award winner in Canada, and Mr Mouton, who is the only horse to defeat On To Norway in his past 33 races. Emoticon Legacy and Mr Mouton are both 4-year-olds.

Emoticon Legacy, who finished third in the Maple Leaf Trot, is the 3-1 second choice on the morning line and will leave from post 3 with Scott Zeron driving for trainer Luc Blais. Mr Mouton, 7-2 on the morning line, will start from post 1 with trainer/driver Åke Svanstedt while Hillexotic, 4-1, goes from post 4 with Austin Hanners driving for trainer Todd Luther.

The Charlie Hill Memorial is race 11 on Saturday's card. The Jim Ewart Memorial, for older pacers, will follow two races later.

Four-year-old Dandy Ideal, who won the Grade 1 Dan Patch Stakes on Aug. 14 at Hoosier Park and finished third in the Grade 3 Always B Miki Pace a week later at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania, is the 8-5 morning-line favorite. Jason Bartlett will drive the son of American Ideal-OK Heavenly for trainer Hunter Oakes.

-by Ken Weingartner

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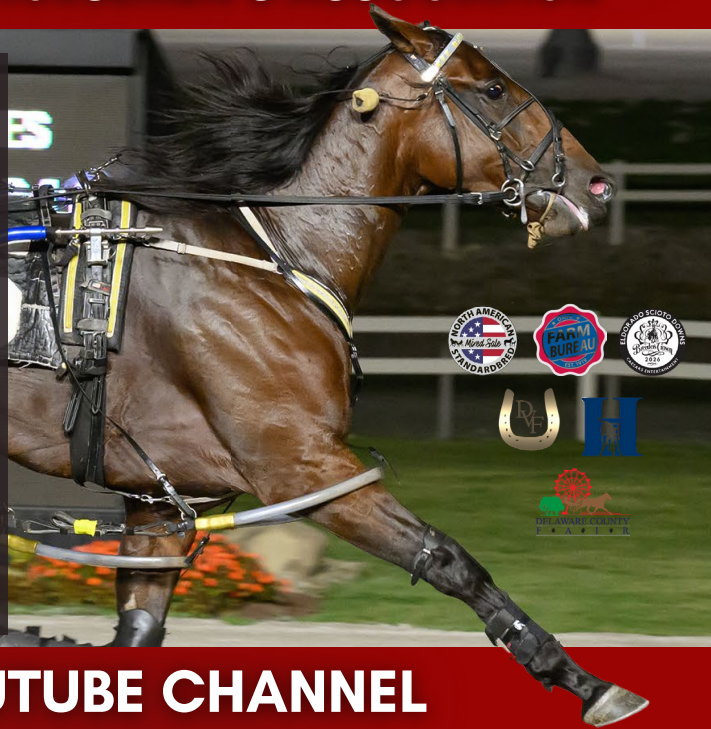
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POST TIME 5:15 PM



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Rhoden Blue's connections have high hopes for OHSS Championship

By Wes Mayberry for OHHA

Entering the 2026 season, Neil MacInnis could only hope to be at Eldorado Scioto Downs for the Ohio Sires Stakes Scarlet Championships. As it turns out, that's exactly where he'll be on Saturday (Sept. 12) to watch Rhoden Blue race for an OSS title on Ohio Super Night.

"The foundation of anything you do in this industry is hope, and we were hopeful that we would culminate to this," said MacInnis, who trains Rhoden Blue and co-owns her with his daughter, Rory. "We're ecstatic that this opportunity has happened, but at the same time, we were hopeful from the beginning that this would be a possibility, and we prepared for it. I managed her racing all summer long with the idea and the hope that we'd be here, and here we are."

Rhoden Blue is one of nine sophomore filly pacers vying for a title in this milestone 50th season of the OSS as Scioto Downs hosts all eight \$300,000 divisions of the Scarlet Championships as part of a 16-race card starting at 5:25 p.m. For Neil and Rory, who live near Toronto, Ontario, Canada, the long trips to Ohio have paid off.

"This is the culmination of what Rory and I have done together and what it means for us and our growth. This is hard work, and getting to this point shows the fruits of our labor," Neil said. "I will be especially thinking of my dad, Frank, who passed away in March. He was the reason I'm into horse racing, and he would have been so looking forward to this."

The journey to Saturday's race started back on May 8 when MacInnis and driver James MacDonald came away impressed with Rhoden Blue's performance at Woodbine Mohawk Park. She was in ninth place and trailed the leader by more than 12 lengths at the halfway mark before charging up the field to finish second.

"The first thing James said when he came off the bike was, 'Not many fillies can do what she just did.' So I knew I had something there," MacInnis remembered.



Rhoden Blue starts from post 7 in the 5th race at Scioto Saturday.

With Tyler Smith in the bike, Rhoden Blue won a Buckeye Stallion Series race at Scioto Downs on June 5, this time coming from sixth place and seven lengths back at the halfway mark. That's when MacInnis decided to give her a shot against better competition in the OSS. That decision paid off, as the Lather Up filly once again put her closing speed on display. Driven by Smith, she trailed the leader by over eight lengths and was in seventh place at the half but won by three-quarters of a length in 1:52 at Scioto Downs on July 4.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 16](#)

A large, stylized promotional graphic for the Ohio Horse Sires Stakes (OHSS) 50th anniversary. The background is a night-time view of a racetrack with bright lights. At the top, a gold archway contains the text "CELEBRATING 50 YEARS". Below this, the letters "OHSS" are prominently displayed in a large, gold, blocky font. To the left of the "O" is a circular emblem containing a white outline of the state of Ohio. To the right of the "S" is a circular emblem containing a white five-petaled flower. In the center, below the "OHSS" text, is a gold silhouette of a horse and driver in a sulky. Below the "OHSS" text, the words "SIRE'S STAKES" are written in a large, bold, gold font. Underneath that, "SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12" is written in a large, bold, white font. Below the date, "POST TIME 5:15 PM" is written in a smaller, gold font. At the bottom left is the "FOX SPORTS 2" logo. At the bottom right, "LIVE ON FOX SPORTS 2" is written in a bold, white font, with "7:30 - 11 PM" written below it in a smaller, white font.

"That confirmed that what happened before wasn't a one-off and that I had a horse with a real determination to race," MacInnis said. "I credit that to the work my daughter and I did in bringing her along and teaching her to race."

Prior to the next OSS race on Aug. 28 at Scioto Downs, Smith cautioned MacInnis about being too aggressive with a spot in the final likely secured. MacInnis agreed with the strategy, and Smith had Rhodena Blue in last place at the halfway mark before letting her put her signature late surge on display. That time, however, it was only good enough for a fourth-place finish as the top four horses were separated by just one-fifth of a second at the line.

"Tyler waited and came charging at the end, and I thought she was second in that race," MacInnis said. "That's when I knew that she's as legitimate as any other filly in that race."

Looking ahead to Saturday, Rhodena Blue opened with 10-1 odds after drawing the seven hole with Trevor Smith tabbed to drive. Though far from the early favorite, her past performances are proof that you can never count her out.

"We're hoping for some speedy fractions, and that may very well play into her racing style," MacInnis said.

Seaside Shuffle (Chris Page) is the 5-2 morning-line favorite and will leave from post five. Other top competitors include Sassy By The Sea (Tyler Smith, 7-2), a three-time OSS winner this season, as well as Rodeo Dancer (Brett Miller, 9-2) and Seaside Charm (Ronnie Wrenn Jr., 9-2). It's certainly a talented field, but MacInnis is confident that Rhodena Blue is prepared.

"I don't have a track, so her training regimen takes her through fields and up and down hills over long stretches. She jogged Monday and Tuesday between eight and 10 miles over fairly rugged ground," he said. "Her biggest attribute is that last burst, so my training thoughts were preparing her strength and endurance to be ready to strike at the end."

MacInnis says a victory on Saturday would be a huge blessing for him and his daughter, who celebrated her 11th birthday on Monday.

"I can't say enough about the involvement of my daughter — the growth and maturity she has for an 11-year-old is absolutely striking," he said. "She's involved 50% on training decisions, and she's wise beyond her years."

With the journey he and his daughter have been on with Rhodena Blue, MacInnis knows they both will come away feeling victorious no matter what place the filly finishes.

"It would be a blessing to show well, but for us, the victory happened quite a while back when my daughter and I started on this journey with the people we've met along the way," he said. "I'm just a small-time grass-roots guy who started with the ultimate dream. What could be better than this?"

A preview of the each of the remaining divisions of fillies is below.

Sophomore Filly Trotters

Chip Shot (Wrenn Jr.) opened as the 2-1 favorite for trainer Vernon Beachy and owners John Schlabach and Walnut View Farm. The Mission



CONRAD PHOTO

Tempting Flames goes for her sixth straight win on Saturday at Scioto Downs.

Accepted filly scored wins in the fourth and fifth legs of the OSS in matching 1:54 2/5 miles, which is a lifetime best. She has seven wins and \$112,538 in earnings in 14 lifetime starts and will leave from post five. Sarah's Mission (Page) is the 7-2 second choice. The Ron Burke trainee will leave from post two.

Freshman Filly Trotters

Made For More (Wrenn Jr.) is the 5-2 morning-line favorite after drawing the rail. The Beachy trainee is a two-time winner in the OSS this season, recording victories in the third and fourth legs. The Long Tom filly is owned by Schlabach and has hit the board in all seven seasonal starts with four wins and three seconds to go with \$208,500 in earnings. Her lifetime mark of 1:54 1/5 came in the third leg of the OSS. Marcus Melander trainee Blue Ranger (Aaron Merriman) opened as the 3-1 second choice and will leave from post five. Secrets Ilia (Brett Miller), a Micah Miller trainee with three OSS wins this season, will leave from post eight.

Freshman Filly Pacers

Despite drawing the far outside post, Tempting Flames (David Miller) opened as the prohibitive favorite at 9-5 ahead of 3-1 second choice Cleveland Darby (Page). Tempting Flames is a four-time winner in the OSS this season, and her lifetime mark of 1:50 in the fourth leg at Scioto Downs was a track record for sophomore filly pacers and equaled the world record for that division on a five-eighths mile track. Owned by William Hartt and trained by Michael Hitchcock, she has hit the board in all seven seasonal starts with five wins and two seconds while banking \$228,100. Cleveland Darby is trained by Burke and will leave from post seven. Joe Bongiorno trainee Party Up (Luke Hanners) is a three-time OSS winner and the lone horse to defeat Tempting Flames in the series this year. The Lather Up filly will leave from post six.



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AT THE TRACK

By Darin Zoccali ✕ [AtTheTrack7](#)

50 Years at The Meadowlands

Last week, The Meadowlands Racetrack turned 50 years old, and while many things have changed over the years, including the grandstand, one thing has remained constant: The Meadowlands is the most wagered upon harness racetrack in North America.

The Meadowlands came to fruition at a time when several of harness racing's most renowned racetracks were on the verge of financial difficulties and eventual closure.

Brandywine Raceway, one of the most picturesque venues in the sport, would close 13 years later after a Delaware slots bill that was passed by the legislature was vetoed by then Governor Mike Castle. That bill likely would have saved the racetrack. The reason for their losses in the late 1970's and 1980's was primarily attributed to Liberty Bell in nearby northeast Philadelphia. Liberty Bell was the first pari-mutuel racetrack in Pennsylvania, but citing losses from Atlantic City casinos and the rebuilding of nearby Garden State Park, Liberty Bell closed in 1986.

Roosevelt Raceway was the premier venue for harness racing for decades since it's opening in 1940. But after being sold in 1984, it quickly went into a downward trend before closing in 1988.

Interestingly, The Meadowlands was originally viewed as a potential home to the New York Yankees, whose stadium was getting older and a change was needed. The Yankees opted to stay in the Bronx and a different sports team – the New York Giants – became the focus as The Meadowlands' first tenant. Sonny Werblin, the first Chairman of the New Jersey Sports and Exhibition Authority (N.J.S.E.A.) came up with the vision for The Meadowlands Sports Complex and led the state to secure the funding for the vision. Without Sonny Werblin, there would be no Meadowlands Racetrack.

The Meadowlands Racetrack was the N.J.S.E.A.'s solution to the massive construction bonds that were owed for the construction of Giants stadium. The revenue from the wagering handle on the races at The Meadowlands paid the bonds for both The Meadowlands Racetrack and Giants Stadium.

The first employee of The Meadowlands Racetrack was Bob Quigley, the initial General Manager of The Meadowlands. But Quigley's background was thoroughbred racing and he made the most important hire in the 50-year history of The Meadowlands when he brought on Joe DeFrank as the Director of Racing. Among many of DeFrank's ideas was a 10-horse starting gate, not seen before in harness racing. DeFrank recruited horsemen from all over the country to come to The Meadowlands and famously told the drivers in the first drivers' meeting at The Big M, "if you are on the outside, keep moving and if you get beat, you get beat trying."

Over 40,000 people attended the first night of racing on September 1, 1976, a night that included Rambling Willie, the most renowned standardbred of that time. The racetrack famously had the George Washington Bridge closed to shoot a commercial of Carmine Abbatiello driving a horse over the bridge.

The Meadowlands provided harness racing with its first million-dollar horse race, the \$1 million Meadowlands Pace in 1980, which was won by the great Niatross. Just one month later, the first \$2 million purse in North American horse racing history was offered in the Woodrow Wilson Pace, won by Land Grant. There wouldn't be a \$2 million thoroughbred race until the inaugural running of the Breeder's Cup in 1984.

Horses like Niatross, Nihilator and Mack Lobell would grace the East Rutherford oval in the first decade of racing, but harness racing was not the only breed of racing offered by The Meadowlands. Thoroughbred racing would begin just one year after the track's opening and the great Dave Johnson was hired as the track announcer for the thoroughbred meet.

Greats of the sport like Seattle Slew, Spectacular Bid and Alysheba would race at The Meadowlands. John Henry would contest his final race at The Big M in the 1984 Ballantine's Scotch Classic.

In 1982, Tom Durkin became the standardbred voice of The Meadowlands. For the rest of that decade, The Meadowlands was the home to two of the most renowned race callers in the history of the sport, Johnson and Durkin. The Meadowlands truly was the mecca.

I "grew up" at The Meadowlands through the 1990's and even then

would have people say to me "you should have seen this place in it's heyday." I never understood that. On a Saturday night, my father and I would have to get to the racetrack at 5:30 PM for a 7:30 PM post time just to assure ourselves of a seat in the Clubhouse Teletheater. You would buy a ticket from John, dressed in his traditional Meadowlands blazer outside. As a kid, it felt like buying a ticket to a carnival. We would have to stand along the wall and wait for someone from the afternoon session to leave before we could find a seat for the live racing that night.

The Pegasus was always packed. Terraces trackside restaurant was full and buzzing. The line at Dunkin' Donuts for coffee was a dozen people deep. A crowd, myself included, would huddle around the television studio outside the clubhouse teletheater awaiting Bob "Hollywood" Heyden's "Carvel Quiz" for the night, with the hopes of knowing the answer and winning a Dinner for Two at Terraces.

The hidden gem of The Meadowlands was Franchises, which was nestled on a floor with only one stairway to access, located in between the clubhouse and second floor level. Franchises offered a carving station with delicious deli meat and great dinner specials. It was the best kept secret at the track for many years.

On the track, I got to see horses like Continentalvictory and Hot Lead compete. The wars between Riyadh and Jenna's Beach Boy, and horses like Tune Town and Gee Gee Digger, made Saturday nights just awesome. Even in the 2000's the Saturday night wars between Allstar Bluejean and Florida Boy in the \$100,000 Claiming races each week were must-see TV. The lowest class race on a Saturday night back then was a \$20,000 claiming race. There would be claiming races for \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000, up to \$100,000-plus. Yet people would still say to me again, "you should have seen this place in its heyday." The track would routinely handle \$5 million on a Saturday night. The buzz around the track was always electric, even for a winter late-closer series. On Kentucky Derby Day, I would run up the old grandstand ramp, blowing by the crowd that was all older than me, to get to two sets of escalators so we could get the spot we wanted in the teletheater. The Meadowlands was the greatest show in town, and I had the best seat in the house, next to my dad.

Fast forward to 2026 as we celebrate 50 years of The Meadowlands Racetrack, I find myself writing a column where I am saying, "you should have seen this place when I grew up there."

Happy 50th to The Big M. Here's to 50 more!



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NY/KY Eligible
Filly o/o Alwaysbafoolrudeo
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HIP 169 | Curacao Blue Chip
NY Eligible
Colt o/o Blonde Onthe Beach
Blue Chip Farms

HIP 201 | Midnight Dancer
NY/KY Eligible
Filly o/o Dance Number
Alliance Bloodstock

HIP 268 | Twisted Silk
NY/KY Eligible
Filly o/o Blend
Alliance Bloodstock

DAY 3

HIP 436 | Lost Signal
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Filly o/o Cimarron Rose
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BY DERICK GIWNER

It's back! Following a six month layoff, On The Backstretch returns for the 304th Q&A and we've tabbed one of the hottest trainers in the sport, Vernon Beachy.

At 38 years old, Beachy is fast approaching his career best in wins for a season and has already doubled his best year in earnings. He is a native of Dover, Delaware who concentrates on Ohio and western Pennsylvania,

On the day he had to scratch three horses from the \$300,000 Pennsylvania Sire Stakes finals and just a handful of nights from racing a number in the \$300,000 Ohio Championships, Beachy took the time to discuss his path in the sport from an Amish upbringing to a football-loving trainer having a career year. Enjoy!

TRAINER VERNON BEACHY

How did you get started in harness racing?

I started when I was a teenager. I worked at a farm where Henry Westbrook Jr. trained a couple horses. They hired me as a farm man. That was in Richfield Springs, New York. I was Amish and grew up around Standardbreds, so I was familiar with them.

You were born in Dover, Delaware, how did you end up in New York?

My parents moved to Richfield Springs when I was 14, I think. We lived there for a few years. And that's where I got my start in horse racing and I raced primarily at Saratoga.

You mentioned being born Amish. What made you leave that lifestyle?

I left the Amish community in 2000, and I think it was like 11 when I left, but I got a taste of racing horses and that kind of ended me wanting to ever be Amish. My whole family is still Amish and they moved back to Dover, Delaware.

You have training stats dating back to 2011, but seem to have branched out in 2020. What changed that year?

So I was at Saratoga. It's a small place with a lot of families that have been there for years. It was hard to get started there. I always had a couple horses. I liked to buy trotters that made breaks off the Amish truck and tinkered with her shoes. That's what got me started with the trotters. I always wanted to get bigger and the Midwest seemed like the place that had the most opportunities for a young trainer. So after COVID, I packed up and moved out to Burton, Ohio. So it just kind of took off from there.

Was it hard to go somewhere new and start fresh?

I think I knew like three people. I knew Chris Lems and Jordan Hope. Chris Lems used to come to Saratoga and drive a little bit in the winter-time, and from Vernon Downs, I knew him a little bit. I came out here one day and looked at farms and I ran into him at the farm. He told me, 'You can race as much as you possibly want to out here. Sometimes you just have to give your horses a week off because you can't race them every week'.

Allegiant brought you into the spotlight in 2023 and 2024. What were you thinking when you saw she went a mile-rate of 1:48 in Sweden this year to become the world's fastest trotter?

I was surprised but I wasn't. She's a really good horse and I think people knew that before. I was proud of her for sure.



DERICK GIWNER PHOTO

Vernon Beachy with Grade 1 Delmonica Hanover winner Victorianas Secret.

You've been successful for years but have really picked up the pace in 2026 with a 36% win rate while more than doubling your best yearly earnings. Did you just get lucky with the right horses?

Yeah, pretty much. Every year you set eyes on a new standard, a new goal. As you do better – obviously Allegiant was a big part of that – people notice you more. It allows you to purchase more babies, and the more young horses you get to buy, the better your chances are. This year, we were lucky enough to hit on quite a few of those that are really nice horses. That boosts everything.

Your stats are so good the someone on X called you the Amish Melander. What do you think of that nickname?

That's kind of funny. We had fun with it. I mean, it's a good comparison, I guess, right?

Are you even a little surprised with how well you've done this year?

Oh, for sure, yeah. Every year you set a goal for yourself, and my goal this year was I was hoping to make \$1,000,000. So yeah, it has definitely been a much better year than I had expected.

You've done some driving and amassed 45 wins in 179 starts from 2021 to 2023. Why did you stop driving?

I drove at the fairs and I don't do the fairs much anymore at all. And if I do, I have a second trainer, Steve Byler. That's what he wants to do, so I let him drive at the fairs if we do go. It's just not my thing. I enjoy getting the young horses, breaking them, watching them develop, and driving is not really my thing.

What is your favorite track to race at and why?

I like The Meadows. It's a really good surface, good people to race with, and they write nice classes for young horses.

What is your favorite thing to do outside of harness racing?

I'm big football fan.

What's your favorite team?

Green Bay Packers.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 21](#)

How does a kid from Dover, Delaware who lived in New York end up a Green Bay Packers fan?

When I first left the Amish, I had cable TV, TV in the house was new. So, we're going to have all the new stuff that we could possibly get and my buddy was a Cowboys fan and he didn't have cable TV at the time. So he asked me if he could come over and watch the game. That was the first game I ever watched. Randall Cobb made an unbelievable play down in the middle of the field and it's still one of the highlight plays that they show quite a bit. That's the day I became a Green Bay Packers fan and a Dallas Cowboy hater.

What is one word that describes harness racing for you?

Exciting.

What was your best moment in harness racing?

I would have to say it wasn't a final, but winning the Hambletonian Oaks elimination. Being able to race on Hambletonian Day that was the highlight. Even if it didn't end the way I would like, it was like a dream come true to be there. Now I need to go out and win one.

Who is your favorite horse in the barn?

Surreal Ideal. He's been a great horse for us, surprising, really. We didn't buy him thinking he could be anything close to what he is now.

You have a boatload of finalists set for Ohio Champions night at Scioto on September 12. Which two have the best chance of winning?

Debt Free and Made For More.

Which horse are you most excited about for the future?

Those [I just mentioned] could be interesting. Walks The Fire is a very underachieving colt to this point. I still think he's going to surprise at some point. If not this year, he could potentially come back to be really nice to be 3-year-old.

In addition to owning yourself, you have other owners. How grateful are you for them?

Without the owners, the grooms, second trainers . . . none of this is possible without everyone, the whole team. There's no "I" in team. Linda Toscano used to tell me that all the time when I sent Allegiant out to her.

If you had the power to change one thing in the sport, what would it be?

Maybe I shouldn't even say it, but race officials, racetrack managers should be held accountable the same way as us trainers are. Meaning if they run a race late or anything like that, that's no problem. But if we are one minute late for Lasix, we get scratched, we get fined. That's something that I would change.

How do you view the future of harness racing?

It looks scary right now with what's going on out east. And if that can happen to them out there, like what's happening at The Meadowlands, it could happen here.

It's a great sport. And it's not just the trainers, it's breeders, owners. It's just a lot of people employed by our agriculture with racehorses. And if that goes away, it's a big void in the whole country.

What is going to be your goal for next year?

I don't know. I want to win more. I want to win one of these [Ohio Sire Stakes] finals [this year]. Everything has to fall into place. As you see, we've had a great year and we've swept multiple legs and Sire Stakes in one night at some places, but everything has to go perfect to win a final. They are hard to win.



GIWINER PHOTO

Vernon Beachy greets regular driver Ronnie Wrenn, Jr. with a hi-five.

You had to scratch three out of the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes finals today due to sickness. That has to hurt?

Yeah, it's hard to do. I would say probably three years ago, two years ago, it would have been a lot harder. It makes it a lot easier this year because I've had a better year and the owners are more willing to let you do what you need to do. It was the right thing for the horse. If we raced, maybe we could've been fourth or fifth, but it is going to hurt the horse long term.

Time for the stretch drive:

Best Horse you ever saw: Muscle Hill as a 3-year-old.

Lasix – Yes or No: Yes.

Favorite TV Show: Two and a Half Men.

Trotters or Pacers: Trotters. They are just more fun; more of a challenge.



Winbak Farm

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Met's Hall-Tourin The Town-Glidemaster
3, 2:00.2h '26 (\$41,719)

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Driver: Wade Tomaszewski
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Big racing & big anniversary mark a big weekend at Big M

The final weekend of harness racing at The Meadowlands before a four-week break will go out with a bang this Friday (Sept. 11) and Saturday (Sept. 12), as \$1.78 million in purses will be on the line Friday on New Jersey Classic Finals Night before the track's 50th anniversary is celebrated Saturday, with the fans reaping all of the rewards.

First up on Friday are the NJC dashes for 2- and 3-year-olds of each sex and gait. The four events for trotters go for \$250,000 each, while the four paces have \$150,000 purses. Also on the menu is the \$188,200 Girl Power for mare trotters.

TIME TO CELEBRATE: The Meadowlands has been the top harness track in the sport since it opened, and if you come out on Saturday, you can celebrate the 50th anniversary of the mile oval.

If you are one of the first 1,000 in attendance, you will receive a commemorative Meadowlands 50th Anniversary flask.

Throughout the evening, there will be video reels, interviews and more.

In addition, there will be concession specials at the Café, with \$1 hot dogs, pretzels, popcorn and soda and \$2 Bud and Bud Light drafts (for ages 21 and older).

The specials are available from 6-11 p.m. with a limit of five items per transaction.

It's a good night to be in the Players Club. Members can swipe their card at any self-service terminal for a chance to win up to \$50.

IT'S LIVE ON FOX: The New Jersey Classic Finals plus the Girl Power for mare trotters will be shown live to a nationwide television audience as part of the New York Racing Association's "America's Day at the Races" series.

The broadcast can be seen Friday night on Fox Sports 1 (FS1) from 8-11 p.m., and the team of Jessica Otten and Gabe Prewitt will provide commentary and selections.

-edited release (Dave Little for The Meadowlands)

ROSECROFT READIES FOR FALL MEETING

The Maryland harness racing circuit returns to the Capital Region on Monday (Sept. 14) when Rosecroft Raceway kicks off its 2026 Fall Meeting.

The 27-night stand will feature live racing on Monday and Thursday evenings through Dec. 17, with nightly first post at 7:15 p.m. (ET). The exceptions to the standard schedule include both of the Fall Meeting's marquee events: the Maryland Showcase of Champions program, on Sunday, Oct. 11; and the Potomac Pace, on Sunday, Nov. 8. Both Sunday programs will begin at 6 p.m. and will replace the immediately following Monday programs. Rosecroft will additionally be dark on Thanksgiving (Thursday, Nov. 26).

The \$800,000 Maryland Showcase of Champions program will feature all eight fall Maryland Sire Stakes series finals for 2- and 3-year-olds on the same program, reviving the format for the first time in well over a decade. Four weeks later, North America's top open pacers will converge on the Capital Region for the 11th edition of the Grade 3 \$125,000 Potomac Pace, Maryland's only graded Standardbred race.

Players will be treated to a steady dose of full, competitive fields and value opportunities, including two 50-cent Pick-4s on each card with a reduced 15% takeout, as well as a 50-cent Jackpot Hi-5 on the final race of each program. Free program pages, the Players' Guidetip sheet, and live and archived video will be available on the track's new website, www.rosecroftraceway.com.

For more information, visit www.rosecroftraceway.com, and follow Rosecroft's Facebook (facebook.com/RosecroftRaceway) and X (x.com/Rosecroft) accounts for up-to-date news and notes all season long.

-edited release (Rosecroft)

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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, SEPTEMBER 10

RACE 6

(2) SOUTH PARK was closing best of all in the stretch and that was only his debut. Look for him to show more tonight if positioned correctly.

-Kevin Plowcha



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

RACE 1

(5) PROMISES TO KEEP had good trot on the end of the mile last week despite missing seven weeks of action before that race. Note that all three foes that beat her are in the final.

-Derick Gwerner



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

RACE 13

(6) AMERICAN SON has been live in all recent starts for Chris Ryder and he gets a new set of hands tonight as Ahle gets the call; top billing.

-Matt Rose



RACE 7

(3) DEVILISH HILL qualified about as well as a horse could at the Meadowlands last Friday and got the nod from Bartlett here.

-Greg Reinhart



RACE 5

(4) SEASIDE CHARM seemingly came up flat last time after missing 31 days. In reality it was just that she was facing perhaps the best 3-year-old pacing filly in the country in Miss Jum Jabber.

-Gwerner



FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis Thursday Friday Saturday

Meadowlands Analysis Friday Saturday

Scioto Downs Analysis Saturday

Yonkers Analysis Thursday Saturday

DHP PPS

HARNESS EYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

BRANDON BLVD BACK AT THE TOP OF WEEKLY TOP 10 POLL

Brandon Blvd returned to No. 1 and two unbeatens joined the Top 10 in the Week 13 Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown poll released Wednesday (Sept. 9).

Brandon Blvd, who was at the top of the poll in Weeks 6 through 8, moved up from second after winning the fourth leg of the Kentucky Championship Series for 3-year-old male pacers on Tuesday (Sept. 8) at the Red Mile. He replaced Apex, who finished fourth in his New Jersey Classic elimination for 3-year-old male trotters this past Friday at the Meadowlands, at No. 1. Apex dropped to fourth in this week's rankings after spending four weeks at the summit.

Super Chapter, who won the Grade 1 Maple Leaf Trot at Woodbine Mohawk Park on Saturday, vaulted from fourth to second in this week's poll. On To Norway, who won the Open trot at Harrah's Hoosier Park, remained third.

Brandon Blvd received 13 of 35 first-place votes, one more than Super Chapter and seven more than On To Norway. Apex retained three first-place votes.

Nezuko Kamado S, who races Wednesday afternoon (Sept. 9) at the Red Mile, took over the fifth spot in the rankings in an exchange of positions with idle Miki And Minnie. Also idle last week were No. 7 Big Ranger and No. 9 Bourbonista S.

Joining the Top 10 were 2-year-old male pacer Shalom Hanover and 2-year-old female trotter Wall Of Fame. Shalom Hanover improved to 6-for-6 this season with a win in his Pennsylvania Sire Stakes final on Monday at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania and Wall Of Fame improved to 7-for-7 with a victory in her New Jersey Classic elimination on Friday at the Big M.

Twin B Joe Fresh and Loua Dipa dropped out of the Top 10.

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 13 – 9/9/2026

Rank	Name (1st Votes)	Age/Sex/Gait	Record	Earnings	Points	Pvs
1	Brandon Blvd (13)	3cp	10-7-2-1	\$935,695	310	2
2	Super Chapter (12)	4ht	7-5-2-0	\$571,707	284	4
3	On To Norway (6)	4gt	10-9-1-0	\$424,250	268	3
4	Apex (3)	3ct	6-4-1-0	\$741,716	242	1
5	Nezuko Kamado S	3ft	7-6-1-0	\$543,905	165	6
6	Miki And Minnie (1)	4mp	8-6-0-2	\$372,099	118	5
7	Big Ranger	3ct	8-5-1-0	\$402,337	102	7
8	Shalom Hanover	2cp	6-6-0-0	\$310,276	84	--
9	Bourbonista S	5mt	8-4-2-1	\$185,840	68	8
10	Wall Of Fame	2ft	7-7-0-0	\$242,500	54	--

ALSO: Francent N 35; Best Chip 32; Melillo 26; Miss Jum Jabber 21; Starstruck Dreamer 20; Odds On Mr Mamba 18; Loua Dipa 17; Twin B Joe Fresh 16; Al Papi 15; Prince Hal Hanover 9; Victorianas Secret 8; Nordic Catcher S, Walspea 4; Sea Bistro Hanover 2; Geologic, Jimdougie Armitage, Waves Of Fortune 1.

-release (by Ken Weingartner for Hambletonian Society)

GRETCHEN ATHEARN GETS 1,000TH TRAINING WIN AT PLAINRIDGE PARK

When Acushla Machree N won the featured \$25,000 Open Handicap for fillies and mares at Plainridge Park on Tuesday (Sept. 8), it gave Gretchen Athearn the 1,000th training win of her career.

Athearn is a native of Exeter, New Hampshire who started learning about horse care and harness racing from Dana W. Childs when she was 14 years old. Then after high school, she attended the Equine Studies Program at SUNY Morrisville and began applying what she learned there, in the real world of racing at tracks in New England.

Athearn's first training win came in 2014 with a 9-year-old pacing

gelding named To Bad Honey, who opened up seven lengths at the wire to claim a 2:02 3/5 victory at Scarborough Downs for purse of \$1,000. Today, Athearn competes in all the top classes at Plainridge Park and has developed and campaigned a litany of horses that have made headlines throughout the industry.

For her career to date, Athearn has 1,000 wins, 1,177 seconds and 1,156 thirds from 7,679 starts, with earnings just shy of \$8.5 million and a .266 lifetime UTR. She had career high wins (68) and earnings (\$979,945) in 2025, the year she won her first training title at Plainridge Park.

This year at Plainridge, Athearn is currently tied for the training lead with 33 wins and has the third best earning totals at the meet of just under \$500,000.

Athearn also has a family loaded with racing acumen, with husband Mark and sons Matty and Kyle all driving and training.

-edited release (by Tim Bojarski for Standardbred Owners of Massachusetts)

OHHA TO LIVE STREAM OHIO SIRES STAKES CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association (OHHA) will live stream "Saturday Night at the Races" presented by the Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center on Saturday (Sept. 12) from Eldorado Scioto Downs.

The live stream, which can be seen on the [OHHA YouTube channel](#), will begin at approximately 6:15 p.m. and includes coverage of all eight \$300,000 divisions of the Ohio Sires Stakes Scarlet Championships as well as the \$250,000 Charlie Hill Memorial Trot and \$260,000 Jim Ewart Memorial Pace.

The OHHA's Ashley Dailey will be joined by Jay Wolf as hosts of the "Saturday Night at the Races" coverage.

First race post time for the 16-race card is 5:25 p.m.

"Saturday Night at the Races" is sponsored by Dublin Valley Farms, Hickory Lane Farm, Little Brown Jug, and North American Standardbred Sale.

-edited release (OHHA)

\$6,934 CARRYOVER, \$25K GUARANTEED POOL IN YONKERS PICK 5

Nobody had five-of-five in the Pick 5 on Wednesday night (September 9) at MGM Yonkers Raceway, meaning there will be a \$6,934.98 carryover and a \$25,000 guaranteed pool in the sequence on Thursday night (September 10).

The guarantee in the Pick 5 is being offered as part of the United States Trotting Association's Strategic Wagering Program, and free past performances for the Pick 5 are available [here](#). The Pick 5, which begins in race five and has a \$1 minimum, has a takeout rate of 20 percent.

MGM Yonkers Raceway will have live racing Thursday, then Friday (September 11) will be dark in preparation for Saturday's MGM Yonkers International Trot program.

-edited release (Yonkers Raceway Media)

YONKERS, SOA OF NY EXTEND DEAL

MGM Resorts and the SOANY also announced that they have agreed to extend the existing horsemen's contract, which was due to expire on December 31, 2028, for an additional year, through December 31, 2029. MGM Resorts and the SOANY are proud to be the custodians of Yonkers Raceway, the premier harness track in New York, offering the highest overnight purses in the country, and look forward to many more years of working together.

-edited release (SOA of NY)

BIG RANGER'S CONNECTIONS EYE 2ND STRAIGHT OHSS CHAMPIONSHIP

Big Ranger's connections couldn't have asked much more from him during his freshman season in 2025. He won all seven of his starts and banked \$370,610 and finished the year as an Ohio Sires Stakes champion, Ohio Triple Crown winner, and the Ohio Horse of the Year. Though his perfect record is no longer intact, his sophomore campaign has been another huge success.

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