



Big Bad John



Friday, January 2, 2015

Big Bad John

The Little Brown Jug winner's first yearlings averaged \$60k in Ohio, and his first 2yos race this year!

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2015 fee: \$5,000
(\$4,000 if you bring a friend)

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In 2014, Reasons to Feel Good About Harness Racing

By Bill Finley

Was it a good year or a bad year for harness racing? As is usually the case the answer fell somewhere in between. There were reasons to feel optimistic and reasons to feel pessimistic but a sport that certainly can be admired for its resilience heads into another year still very much alive, very much kicking.

Today, the most encouraging stories and developments in 2014:

Ohio's Resurgence: The slots have done everything that was hoped for in Ohio. Purses are up at all the state's tracks, purses for the sire stakes program are expected to exceed \$5 million in 2015 and some of the tracks, particularly Northfield, have added lucrative Grand Circuit races to their menus.



Northfield Park is leading the way when it comes to Ohio's resurgence

there exceeded everyone's expectations. The Jug itself is expected to get a purse increase all the way up to \$1 million in the near future.

Ontario Racing Battles Back: The glory days of Ontario racing are never coming back and the damage that was done by the end of the Slots at Racetracks Program should never be trivialized. But when the SARP program was ended most thought that Ontario racing was doomed. Instead, the same government that cut off the flow of money from slots woke up to the damage that it had done to the industry and funneled money back into the sport. The end result is that Ontario racing's future, at least its short-term future, is secure and confidence in the industry has been restored.

Father Patrick to do Double Duty: That the sport has not been able to keep its biggest stars on the racetrack has been an on-going problem. Jeff Gural tried to change that by instituting rules that banned the offspring of 4-year-old stallions in major races. But to really see things change, Gural needed someone to embrace the idea of horses breeding and racing during the same year. It's a common practice in Europe, a reason why top horses there still compete at 7, 8, 9, even 10.

Adam Bowden of Diamond Creek Farm and Jimmy Takter bought in and will race and breed Dan Patch Award winner Father Patrick in 2015. While Bowden said the horse will not race as a 5-year-old, this is at least a start. If the Father Patrick experiment is a success, who knows, maybe others will be encouraged and racing and breeding top horses through their 7 or 8 year-old years will become

commonplace.

Another top 4-year-old trotter, E L Titan will also do double duty this year.

Yonkers-to-France Simulcasts a Huge Hit: Would French horseplayers bet significant money on an unfamiliar



product taking place some 3,600 miles away? Would they ever. The Yonkers experiment has been a huge success. The French bet an average of \$300,000 per race on the Yonkers races. The program promises to be bigger and better in

2015, which means more money for purses for Yonkers. Just as importantly, Yonkers and its horsemen's group opened the door for all sorts of possibilities when it comes to sending the signals from American harness tracks to hungry bettors around the globe.

The Sales Are Strong: Though the Harrisburg sale didn't exactly knock it out of the park, virtually every other yearling sale in North America showed a significant increase over 2013 figures. The Lexington sale alone was up 10.6 percent. The results showed that there are still plenty of buyers out there who have confidence in the industry and are willing to pay big money to chase the



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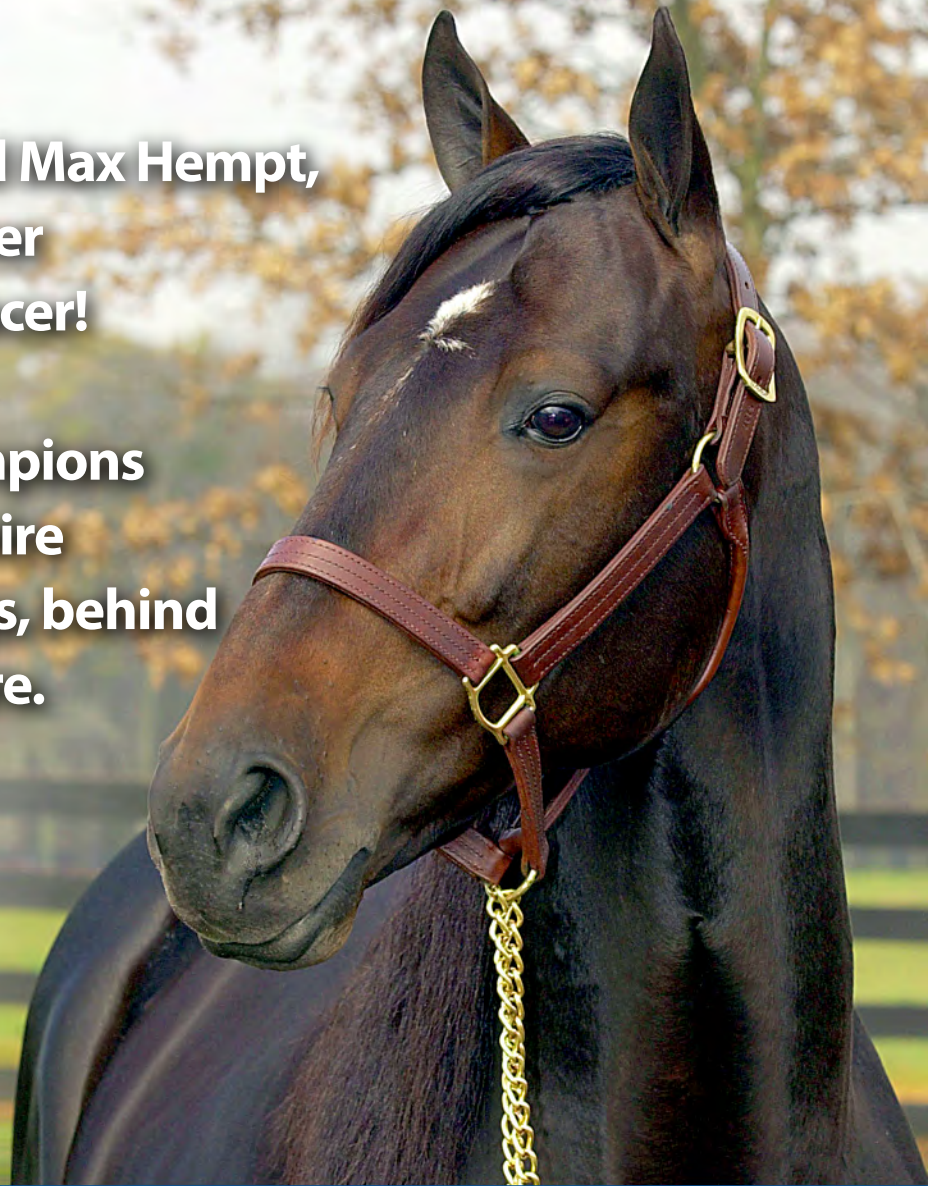
MCARDLE

is the sire of the richest pacer
in North America in 2014:
McWicked, winner of the
Breeders Crown, Adios, and Max Hempt,
and Dan Patch Award winner
as the top 3 year old colt pacer!

This sire of four world champions
is also the second-leading sire
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His first Ohio crop will be
yearlings in 2015.

Booked full in 2013
and 2014.



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dream of someday owning a Hambletonian or Meadowlands Pace or Little Brown Jug winner.

Harness Racing Returns to TV: It's been said that any sport not on TV is a minor league sport. For too long the only harness race on network television was the Hambletonian. But thanks to the efforts of many, including Jeff Gural, Carl Howard and Jack Darling, the Little Brown Jug and the Meadowlands Pace were also televised. Those behind the TV project in 2014 started something important and hopefully it can be expanded upon in 2015.

Åke Svanstedt Conquers America: Harness racing is thriving in Sweden, so why would that country's top trainer pull up stakes and come to America? Obviously, Åke Svanstedt wasn't the least bit worried about the future of North American harness racing when he decided to transplant his stable. Svanstedt had a successful year. Could his success entice others to make the move from Scandinavia to the U.S.?

Cobalt Menace Might Be Under Control: There are probably horsemen out there still trying to get away with using cobalt to move up their horses, but a lot fewer than there were before the use of the drug came under scrutiny. Jeff Gural led the way after it came to his attention that use of the illegal substance was getting out of hand. Gural took it upon himself to test for the drug, going so far as to send samples to a lab in Hong Kong. Gural brought attention to the menace that was cobalt and other states followed suit

and got serious about testing for the drug and penalizing the cheats. Indiana and New York, in particular, were pro-active and instituted stiff penalties for using the drug.

EquiLottery a Promising New Development: As long as anyone can remember, people have been talking about a marriage between the lottery and horse racing with the results of a race deciding the outcome of a lottery. Brad Cummings, the founder of EquiLottery, has taken the idea and run with it. EquiLottery hasn't sold a single ticket yet, but the idea is moving forward and Cummings may soon turn racing's dream into a reality.

Burke Falls Just Short of Pletcher Record
In terms of money won, Ron Burke had the greatest year in harness racing history, but it still wasn't good enough to

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The Meadowlands January 19th Select Mixed Sale

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winner of the 2014 Matron who defeated eventual champion McWicked in the Windy City, along with

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set the record for yearly earnings for a trainer of any breed.

Burke's stable earned \$28,395,784. He fell \$175,913 short of the record set by thoroughbred trainer Todd Pletcher. Pletcher's stable earned \$28,571,697 in 2007.

When it comes to bragging rights for 2014, Burke easily bested Pletcher. Pletcher led all thoroughbred trainers in 2014 with \$22,476,736 in earnings.

Yannick Gingras led all drivers in earnings in 2014 with \$17,295,456. That fell well short of leading thoroughbred jockey Javier Castellano, whose mounts earned \$25,056,464.

Dr. Donald Mossbarger, 92, Dies
Thursday, January 01, 2015 - from the USTA
Communications Department



Dr. Donald Mossbarger (Carol Cramer photo)

Columbus, OH --- Donald E. Mossbarger, DVM, 92, founder of Midland Acres of Bloomingburg, Ohio, died peacefully in his sleep at home on Jan. 1, 2015.

Dr. Donald Mossbarger was the founder of Midland Acres in Bloomingburg, Ohio. Midland Acres was originally established in the 1960s to supplement Dr. Mossbarger's veterinary practice. Midland Acres has stood some of Ohio's best stallions such as

Speed In Action, Final Score and Nobleland Sam. Today, Midland Acres stands nine stallions, including the 2008 Meadowlands Pace champion Art Official and 2011 LBJ champion Big Bad John.

Dr. Mossbarger was a tireless supporter of the efforts to bring the Video Lottery Terminals to Ohio's racetracks. He was a member of the Little Brown Jug Society and a past president and former board member of the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association.

In 1994 Dr. Mossbarger was elected into the Ohio Harness Racing Hall of Fame and in 2014 he was selected as the 30th Little Brown Jug Wall of Fame honoree by the Delaware County Fair.

A full obituary and arrangements will be posted as soon as they are available.

Father Patrick Must Stand in New Jersey

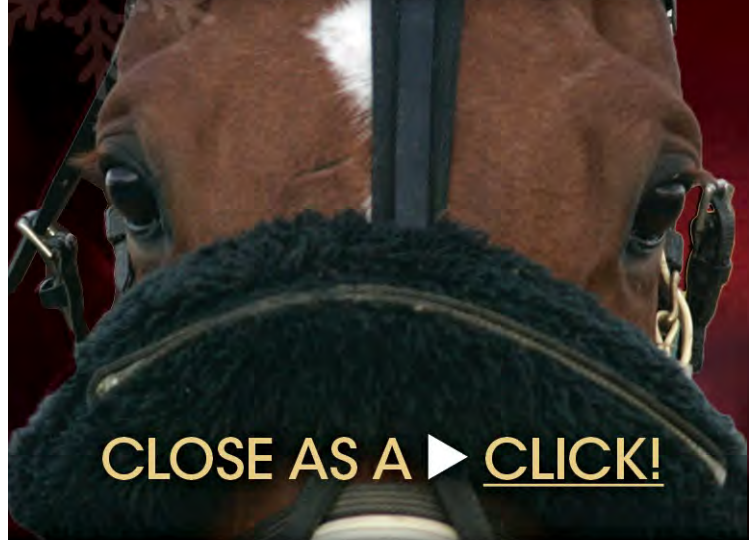


Father Patrick

Pennsylvania racing authorities will not allow Father Patrick to stand at stud in their state because the now 4-year-old horse will spend much of his time in New Jersey, in training for Jimmy Takter. Father Patrick is going to do double duty in 2015, racing and

breeding, and the hope was that he could be bred in

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Pennsylvania. With New Jersey's depleted sires stakes program, it would have been preferable to have Pa-breds.

The story was first reported by Harnessracing.com.

Father Patrick will now stand at stud at Walnridge Farm in New Jersey and his first crop will be registered New Jersey bred.

With a Torrid December, Wrenn Takes Dash Title Away from Merriman

Ronnie Wrenn Jr. left for a week's vacation in Costa Rica yesterday. He definitely had earned it.

Wrenn can rest this week knowing that his ferocious late challenge for the 2014 dash title earned him a hard-fought victory for the No. 1 spot over rival Aaron Merriman.



**2014 dash leader
Ronnie Wrenn Jr.**

Entering December, Merriman looked to have the title all but wrapped up as he was 20 winners ahead of Wrenn and, driving doubleheaders at The Meadows and Northfield, was sure to get more drives in the final month of the year than Wrenn.

The fight for first pace went down to the final night of racing in 2014 as both drove on New Year's Eve at Sports Creek in Michigan but the end result was a Wrenn shellacking. He drove 849 winners on the year to Merriman's 839.

"I'm a little tired, but it's been fun and I am definitely glad I was able to come out on top," Wrenn said.

Entering the Dec. 30 card at Northfield, Wrenn led Merriman by just a single win, but he had so much momentum going for him at the time there seemed little doubt he would end up on top. Wrenn drove six winners at Northfield on the 30th, while Merriman had two.

Merriman still had a shot as he decided to drive at Sports Creek on the 31st, setting up an 11th hour showdown between the two. But, again, it was Wrenn who owned the card. He won six races on the card while Merriman had just one.

"Going into last night (at Sports Creek) I wasn't taking anything for granted," Wrenn said. "I was up five wins but I wasn't comfortable until I clinched it."

Wrenn drove 118 winners during the month from 359 drives for a winning rate of 35 percent. Merriman went 83 for 425 for a 19.6 rate.

"Going into the month, I didn't think I had a chance," Wrenn said. "Even in the middle of the month I was down more than 20 winners and he was driving doubleheaders. I wasn't racing hardly any weekends. Then the late closers started at Northfield and I picked up a ton of live mounts and everything started rolling. I was motivated, I had momentum and I had a lot of good horses to drive."

It was Wrenn's second straight dash title and many believe someday he will be a Grand Circuit star. He said he's thought about trying tougher circuits but isn't ready to go anywhere anytime soon.

"Yes, I do think about making a move but not yet," he said. "You need to have top trainers behind you if you want to go to those tracks. I am very happy with racing at Northfield. The money is good there and I have the support of a lot of trainers."

Changes to Sunshine Select Sale Format
(press release)

In that that the final number of entries for the Sunshine Select Sale will prevent the usage of conventional auction techniques, those 2-year-olds slated to be auctioned on Sunday, Jan. 25, will be sold either privately or via utilizing the existing internet network of ongait.com.

According to Sunshine Select sales manager Bob Marks, "We had significant interest from potential buyers but just not enough quality consigned horses, other than a number of unacceptable potential culls, to make a go of it this year. Plans are to shoot for next year and purchase at least 35-40 pinhook quality yearlings from the 2015 yearling sales in order to provide the necessary nucleus to get this project off the ground in 2016."

The Sunshine Select principals Eric Cherry, owner of South Florida Trotting Center, and Tom Grossman, owner of Blue Chip Farms, remain committed to the "gaited and going" in training sales concept, but regrettably recognize that a change in approach is in order at this time. While we regret the postponement of the Sunshine Select Sale to next year, we feel it will greatly benefit the industry in the long run with a proper liftoff.

Tioga/Gural May Get Casino After All

Governor Andrew Cuomo has asked the Gaming Facility Location Board to reopen bidding for a fourth casino license in New York and focus on the Southern Tier area. Cuomo's latest maneuver could lead to the Jeff Gural-owned Tioga Downs getting a license for a full fledged casino.

The Gaming Facility Location Board was entitled to grant four licenses in the state but instead gave out only three and bypassed the southern tier region of the state where Tioga is located. Tioga was considered a heavy favorite to win one of the four licenses and Gural wasn't shy about expressing his disappointment after he had contributed \$800,000 to the campaign to have non-Indian affiliated casinos legalized in New York. Cuomo's move appears to be an effort to take care of Gural, a major contributor to Democrat candidates both in New York and nationally.

"Considering I was shocked not to win the first time it is difficult to predict what might happen next," Gural said. "One thing for sure is if they put another casino 30 miles away (from Vernon Downs) I am toast at both tracks, just like Finger Lakes with Lago, so I am hopeful, but racing took a beating over the selections they made. The process was flawed as they did not count the previous investment I made, which is ridiculous."

Brett Sturman's Meadowlands

Pick 4 Analysis

Race 7, B-2 Trot

MISTER ANSON has been unleashed in his two recent races since arriving here from Yonkers for trainer Duspiva and he was a crushing winner last week at over 30/1. It came on the heels of a race that he won a week prior by open lengths at 9/1 and this Conway Hall 4-year-old is suddenly a real contender against this group. SWEET JUSTICE broke out into a top horse about this time last year but his last few have been just fair; a possible play against if the price is short. ROLLS BLUE CHIP may have won when last seen two weeks ago if not for the break; will figure in some capacity for Burke from the rail. MODEST PRINCE went a parked out trip last week and held together pretty well; this race didn't come up as tough. IT REALLY MATTERS was active last out in a 1:52:2 mile but couldn't get close to the top choice two back.

Race 8, C-1 F&M Pace

KEN DOLL J finds the rail in a race where no one particularly stands out and should belong on most Pick 4 tickets. She was no match for Balileen last out after quarter moving to the lead but that's ok; the bigger problem is that the barn is off to a 1 for 37 start. BRING THEM HOME went a giant mile on the step up in her most recent despite an active trip; another that's playable from the inside. PRECIOUS ROSE N goes third start off the claim for Allen and was able to jog last out against the C-2's; she's beaten these types last year and shouldn't be disregarded on the step up. ANTIGUA HANOVER is better than her recent lines show and may go overlooked in this spot from post 10.

Race 9, C-1 Trot

JERSEY BOY had plenty of late trot to offer at the added distance in his most recent and this barn is firing right now. CREAMPUFF MACDADDY makes his second start for Burke and showed a lot of talent early in his career up in Canada; drops following the break. WELL BUILT qualified well and may be the classiest of these but makes just his first start since September; not out of the question despite this being his first start back. AMIGO DE GRANDE flashed speed as a longshot last out to be second to well meant winner; TAG UP AND GO took tote support last out but was only fair. B YOYO is another that drops but is always a tough play if the price is short for these connections.

Race 10, C-2 F&M Pace

CANDY STYX N has the potential to blow the doors of this field on the drop to the basement level. This one had been facing vastly superior foes to these not that long ago at Philly and had no chance here in her last pair from outside posts and bulky fields. No excuses now, as a likely short priced favorite from the rail. JET WASH showed

nothing when last seen at this level in early December but that return qualifier against MC Taylor and Voelz Hanover looks awfully good on paper; likely to be blasting from the outside. MANDY'S MATTJESTY has now worked her way down to the bottom, is an obvious short priced contender for Burke; was a winner over this track last year. SMOKE PAN MIRRORS can spring the occasional upset and can be used at this level.

\$8 ticket (\$0.50 base): 2-5 / 1-3-9-10 / 4-9 / 1

\$36 ticket (\$0.50 base): 2-4-5 / 1-9-10 / 2-4-6-9 / 1-10

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Dover Report

Thursday's Results

10, DD, \$25,000, P, DELAWARE Special Handicap Post Positions 1 thru 6 Drawn Post Positions 7 & 8 Drawn, M, 26.4, 55.4, 1:23.1, 1:51.3, FT

1-Papa Ray (h, 6, Village Jolt--Liamatters, by Matt's Scooter), \$1,800 2010 NJ-CLO-Legacy Racing Of De Inc & Reginald A Hazzard II. B-Doris E Martin. T-Wayne Givens. D-Eddie Davis Jr, \$12,500, Lifetime Record: 100-21-16-17, \$356,628

2-Believe This Bob (g, 7, Beach Romeo--Believe This Gal, by Towner's Big Guy) O-Mary Ann Larrimore. B-Robert C Larrimore. T-Joseph Skowyra. D-Ross Wolfenden, \$6,250

3-Simon's Artist (g, 6, Blissfull Hall--Claris, by Real Artist) O-Ringler Stable LLC. B-William H & Richard H Ringler. T-Richard Ringler. D-Trace Tetrack, \$3,000

Calls: 3H, 2H, H, 1, T

Finish Order: Sb Mikes Hot Beach, Just A Jolt, Don't Ya Know, Mustang Art, Lyons Meandragon

To view replay click [here](#)