



Sunday, January 13, 2013



BRUSH and CRUSH with Dean Towers

ROCKNROLL HANOVER
p,3, 1:48.3 (\$2,754,038) • 2013 Fee: \$15,000

MUSCLES YANKEE
3, 1:52.2 (\$1,424,938) • 2013 Fee: \$10,000

LUCKY CHUCKY
3, 1:50.4 (\$2,099,973) • 2013 Fee: \$5,000

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Clean Racing in New Jersey? One Would Think So.

Late last year, Meadowlands' owner Jeff Gural threatened jail time for egregious cheaters. He spoke about freezing samples and sending them to Hong Kong. He floated out the fact he was hiring private investigators. There was a push to show a willingness to go the extra mile to ensure his race-track was being populated by honest trainers.

This was just fine for many, but not all. On chat boards or in grandstands we heard the odd cry of "zealot". He was being judge, jury and executioner. He was trampling a Bill Of Rights. Gural had apparently gone crazy with this horse racing Patriot Act.

Regardless where you stand on the matter, I wonder if at this early stage we can answer if it's worked or not.

This meet the Meadowlands has contested 58 races. Forty-four of them have been won by different trainers. There have been seven horses enter the box "off the claim" and out of those seven only one has won. The leading trainer – the formidable Ron Burke stable – has five wins. It's not like he shouldn't be the leading trainer. He has more horseflesh in his stable than that of a World War I general. If we go back about four or five years, I remember getting this note via email from a racing customer, who bet millions each year.

"I will not spend another dime at the Meadowlands. This sport is finished."

This was emailed directly after the Meadowlands announced they were allowing two tarnished trainers back into their box. They had to, because they had no choice being a public institution. Like many things in racing, it might've been legal and needed to be done, but it wasn't exactly "customer-friendly".

Trainers with suspect records, 40% off the claim rates, wondering who has what, or who is using who as a vet – almost all of those historical criticisms – happened with regularity at the Meadowlands. You could barely bet a race without having to factor it into your handicapping. On the

horseman side, shedrow whispering grew to be shouts and it was becoming more and more of an issue there, as well. For the most part, so far in 2013, that is all but a memory. What we've seen so far are benefits that are tangible. The horse population has tightened the breadth of the field. The odds board has become more player friendly and possesses less variant which drives handle. The races are more contentious. There are no horses who went off at 20-1 last week getting bet to 8-5 off a barn change and winning like they're Nihilator.

If that's not enough, if you are a trainer with a few in your barn who's used to racing for second or third money, you can actually enter to win. I haven't heard rumors of one trainer complain under his or her breath about an unbeatable flavor of the week. It's like a whole different customer and horseman experience.

Things are looking up, no question, and the handle has followed. But is it all smoke and mirrors? Would this have happened no matter what?

In Toronto's Globe and Mail this week, there was a story on Lance Armstrong. In 1999 the sport of cycling was going through what the Meadowlands and much of racing has gone and is going through. At that time the leaders of

(continued on next page)



the sport began to try and get tough on doping. New testing was announced as were new investigators and France went so far as to change rules so that doping was a criminal offence – dope in the Tour De France and get caught, go to jail.

According to the Globe article: “Numerous accounts later written about the 1999 Tour de France paint a picture of a sport terrified of being caught. It was the so-called “Tour of redemption,” the chance to show that they had learned their lesson.”

But it didn't end up working.

Again from the Globe article: “Not everyone got the memo. In his book *The Secret Race*, former Armstrong teammate Tyler Hamilton described the elaborate subterfuges used to get EPO, the drug of choice, to the team's riders. And analysis of 1999-era urine samples done years later, after an EPO test was developed, supports his claims.”

“The tests, which Mr. Armstrong has disputed, showed the drug in 40 per cent of his samples. Among the other riders tested, the drug was present in only 8.6 per cent of samples. The disparity feeds the criticism that Mr. Armstrong won his first Tour by riding dirty in an era that was trying to clean up, thereby showing the rest of the field that they would need to start doping again to keep up.”

So maybe this is all smoke and mirrors. Maybe the way things happened in the past will happen again soon at the Meadowlands.

But I don't think so, because there is a key difference. The Tour De France was the Tour De France. It was the only place to race, and the biggest race in the world. Despite the obstacles, there was still a huge incentive to cheat. If you wanted to cheat you could, and as an added bonus you'd be one of a smaller number of cheaters. Your edge was enhanced in a race which winning could make you millions. Game, set and match to “cheat”.

It's not like that in racing. If you were a cheater, would you race at the Meadowlands in 2013 or another track with similar purses instead? Let's think about that: Light up the trainer stats dropping four seconds off the claim with a nasty class one or a pain killer and get charged by Gural where he's going to try and move hell and earth to throw you in the slammer? Or do it at some other track and maybe get a six-month vacation after numerous appeals?

It's an easy choice.

It also appears to be an easy choice for horseplayers, too. Full fields where horses instead of trainers are handicapped makes for an interesting puzzle.

Maybe the critics are right and Gural is off his rocker, but for whatever reason, early in the meet it appears to have worked pretty well. This is not the same old Meadowlands.

HAVE SOMETHING TO GET OFF YOUR CHEST?

Send a Letter to the Editor of Harness Racing Update at editor@harnessracingupdate.com.

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2, 1:55f; 3, 1:52.2f (\$1,137,285) Introductory fee: \$5,000

Ourasi Dead in France at 32

Ourasi, the legendary French champion and four-time winner of the Prix d'Amerique, died yesterday at the age of 32 at Haras du Gruchy, a farm in the Calvados region of Normandy, France, where he was pensioned. One of the most well-known horses ever in France, Ourasi was a popular hero among his countrymen, drawing then President Francois Mitterand to see him attempt his fourth Prix d'Amerique. He was voted the horse of the century in France.



He went undefeated for 522 days—almost a year and a half—including all of 1986. During this period, he put together 22 straight wins, from Jan 12, 1986 when he won the Prix de Belgique, to June 18, 1987 in the

Ourasi in 2006 wikipedia.com

Prix René Ballière, where he finished second to Olympio de Corseul. His death comes on the 27th anniversary of the beginning of that streak.

In 1988, he traveled to America to take on Mack Lobell, whose reputation in America rivaled Ourasi's in France. The long-anticipated matchup came in the March of Dimes Invitational at Garden State, and looked to be worth the wait as Ourasi came down the stretch just inches ahead of his rival. After a long stretch duel, however, Sugarcane Hanover came up on the outside to win by a neck, with Ourasi back in second, a half-length ahead of Mack Lobell.

Ourasi was as well known for his antics off the track as on. Nicknamed “the do-nothing king” (le roi faineant) in France, he was said to be a lazy workhorse who would only train when he felt like it.

He retired at the age of 10, and stood for 90,000 francs, a record at the time. But he proved to be largely infertile, producing just eight foals in his first year from the 130 mares who traveled from the U.S., France and Scandinavia to be bred to him. In 10 years at stud, he sired just 38 foals, none of which approached his success.

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Retired from stud duty for quite some time, he lived out his life in Normandy, where he frequently received fans and visitors in a paddock he shared with two cows.



Ourasi's official 30th birthday photo in 2012 wikipedia

Some of Ourasi's wins, his reluctance to train, and a visit with him just last year at the age of 31 may be seen in a youtube video here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X70t0O_Tnf0

Accident in Race Nine at Woodbine

TORONTO, January 12 - There was a four-horse spill in the ninth race on Saturday night at Woodbine.

In Commando, driven by James MacDonald, was tipped off cover and advancing first-up in the backstretch when the gelding fell. Hard To Mach (Doug McNair), High Def Z Tam (Billy Davis Jr.) and Anderlecht (Rick Zeron) were unable to avoid the fallen horse, unseating their respective drivers.

MacDonald was taken to hospital with a suspected ankle injury. Davis Jr., McNair and Zeron were able to walk off the track under their own power. McNair booked off his remaining drives.

High Def Z Tam had to be euthanized. In Commando, Hard To Mach and Anderlecht appeared to escape serious injury

Sign Up For Meadowlands Text Service

The Meadowlands Race Office is communicating with horsemen on various racing related functions by text. An agreement with Sumotext enables the office to send mass text messages to all horsemen that have signed up for the service with the push of a button.

That service came into play on Wednesday, when a class for Saturday was short a few horses. A text message was sent out to the 550 subscribers and within minutes horsemen responded. Rather than be dropped, that race is on the card with a ten horse field.

If you are racing at The Meadowlands, it is to your benefit to opt-in to the service. Click here

<http://www.84700.mobi/?MEADOWLANDS>

and provide the required information. You will quickly receive a confirmation text to which you must respond "yes" to accept the service.

You may also text the word "MEADOWLANDS" to 84700 to subscribe.

The text service will also be used by the Race Office at Tioga & Vernon Downs during their live racing season. Subscribing to this offer will include you in the transmissions from all three tracks.

The service is free. Message and data rates from your provider may apply.



Trainer Darran Cassar

HRU: You are from Australia and so many of the horses you have here come from Down Under. How do you get them and why do you have so many horses from there?



Darran Cassar with jockey Joe Talamo

DC: They seem to always come from there. These last five that Joe Muscara bought, he called me out of blue and said he bought a couple of horses for me. He has an agent over there. I have nothing to do with it. With the ones he sends me, I just try to do my best.

HRU: Is it hard to know where to place these horses?

DC: It's a lot easier now. Before it was sort of a guessing game. They're starting to catch up. The breed is getting better and the times are going down. It's easier

to compare now and a lot of times you know right away which ones are the good ones. Sometimes, though, you never know until they get here. Some improve on Lasix, some don't. It's still a bit of pot luck.

HRU: Tell us more about Joe Muscara's pipeline to New Zealand and Australia.

DC: He's bought hundreds of these horses and brings them over all time. It costs about \$20,000 to ship one over, so it doesn't make sense to buy cheaper ones. I give Joe a lot of credit. Anything he buys, there's nothing cheap about them. He pays a minimum of \$60,000 for the ones he brings over.

HRU: Were you influenced by the success so many other Down Under trainers have had here, like Mark Harder, Ross Croghan, Noel Daley?

DC: I really didn't know any of those guys until I got over here. They've always done a good job and deserve a lot of credit because this is not an easy game. You have to be

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lucky to get good horses and then your job is to keep them going. Those guys have done it for a number of years and I am still trying to get there.

HRU: When and why did you decide to come to the U.S.?

DC: It was 11 years ago and I came for a three-month vacation and pretty much never went home. I worked part time in the business back home. I wanted to see what it was like here, liked it and stayed.

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Dear Editor,

As a retired employee of the Meadowlands Racetrack, I am always interested in making harness racing more fan-friendly. For years, I have been suggesting to track management that the first post be moved back from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., as traffic in N.J. is horrendous, especially on Friday night. I have never seen anyone prove the theory that 10-horse fields increase total handle. Often in winter, Aqueduct has five to eight-horse fields all card and the handle is very high. When customers win on low-priced favorites, they tend to increase the total handle by increasing their bets and churning back the winnings. With so many simulcast outlets in N.J., if the Meadowlands wants to increase on-track visitors I have made this suggestion: allow patrons to bring coolers of beer and soda into the picnic area, definitely after April 1, 2013. This has been a tremendous success at Monmouth Park, and has never caused any crowd behavior problem. A free online program should be available for Thursday cards, to see what affect that will have on the online and phone betting handles on the non-weekend card.

Thanks,
Al Gatto



2, M, \$40,000, Pace, PRESIDENTIAL Free For All 1st Leg, M, 26.3, 55.2, 1:23.0, 1:49.0, FT

1-Golden Receiver (g, 8, Village Jove--Royal Gold, by Towner's Big Guy) O-Our Horse Cents Stables & Nina Simmonds. B-Nina Simmonds. T-Mark Harder. D-Tim Tetrack, \$20,000, Lifetime Record: 123-51-18-23, \$1,629,758

2-Fred And Ginger (h, 6, Real Artist--Graceful Motion, by

Beach Towel), \$65,000 2008 LEX-SEL O-Howard A Taylor & Robert M Feldman & Edwin J Gold & Jerry Silva.

B-Ronald Mersky. T-Ron Burke. D-David Miller, \$10,000 3-Modern Legend (g, 5, Modern Art--Ruby Cam, by Camluck) O/B-Dave Drew Associates Inc, CA. T-David Drew. D-John Campbell, \$4,800

Calls: 1H, 1H, 1, 1Q, 1Q

Finish Order: Malak Uswaad N, Meirs Hanover, Abelard Hanover

To view replay click [here](#)

As expected, it was an effortless victory for Golden receiver, who was pounded down to 1-9 favoritism. As always, he went right to the front and dared his rivals to come get him. The 2012 Presidential winner looks on track for a repeat.

6, M, \$40,000, Pace, PRESIDENTIAL Free For All - 1st Leg, M, 26.2, 54.3, 1:22.4, 1:49.4, FT



1-Versado (g, 6, Dragon Again--Beach Jenny, by Beach Towel) O-Kdm Stables Corp.. B-Joseph C & Nancy L Vander Heyden. T-Nick Surick. D-Andy Miller, \$20,000, Lifetime Record: 100-30-14-10, \$808,998

2-Dial Or Nodial (g, 7, Western Ideal--Smart Dialing, by Abercrombie) O-Fashion Farms LLC. B-Arlene L & Jules J Siegel. T-Jim Campbell. D-David Miller, \$10,000 3-Mr Hasani N (g, 5, Christian Cullen--Miss Sands, by Sands A Flyin) O-Muscara Racing Trust. B-Aird Righ Bloodstock LTD, NZ. T-Darran Cassar. D-John Campbell, \$4,800

Calls: 1H, 1H, 1, T, NS

Finish Order: Rockin The House, Second Wind N, Annieswesterncard, Nob Hill High

To view replay click [here](#)

In a game performance, Versado wouldn't let even-money favorite Dial Or Nodial get by in the stretch and held on to win by a nose. The 6-year-old gelding has had a huge week as the victory came just two nights after he won a \$35,000 Preferred at Dover. Driven by Andy Miller, Versado went right to the front. Meanwhile, Dial Or Nodial had to make a first over move, which proved to be unsuccessful. "I told Andy (Miller) that he warmed up better tonight than he did on Thursday and just drive him like he was the best and he will get there," winning trainer Nick Surick said.

7, M, \$20,000, Pace, A-2 Horses and Geldings, M, 27.1, 54.3, 1:22.2, 1:50.4, FT

Mystic Desire (h, 5, Real Desire--Cannes Festival, by Artiscap), \$15,000 2009 LEX-SEL O-Kdm Stables Corp.. B-Pedigree Farm, CA & Karin B Olsson Burgess, CA. T-Nick Surick. D-Andy Miller, \$10,000, Lifetime Record: 49-18-4-7, \$707,584

To view replay click [here](#)

11, M, \$22,500, Pace, A-1/A-2 Horses and Geldings Handicap Post Positions Drawn According to Class, M, 26.2, 54.3, 1:23.3, 1:50.2, FT

1-Escape The News (g, 4, Artiscape--Ideal News, by Western Ideal)

O-Burke Racing Stable LLC & Weaver Brussemi LLC & Jjk Stables LLC & Howard A Taylor. B-Brittany Farms & Val D'Or Farms. T-Ron Burke. D-Yannick Gingras, \$11,250, Lifetime Record: 37-9-5-7, \$449,164

To view replay click [here](#)

Woodbine Report

9, Wdb. \$34,000, Preferred. 26.2, 55, 1:23.1, 1:37, 1:50.3 FT

Sparky Mark (h,6 - Astreos-Luckbealadytonite-Camluck)

O/B-Leo J Thibodeau. T-Mark Austin. D-Scott Zeron, \$17,000. Lifetime Record: 64-28-8-5, \$589,940

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Yonkers Report

5, YR, \$21,000, Pace, NON-WINNERS OF \$18,000 IN LAST 6 STARTS, M, 27.3, 57.0, 1:25.1, 1:53.2, FT

Real Flight (g, 5, Real Desire--Flightofalifetime, by Artsplace), \$11,000 2009 LEX-SEL O-Bamond Racing LLC. B-Brittany Farms. T-Pj Fraley. D-George Brennan, \$10,500, Lifetime Record: 75-15-12-13, \$247,525

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6, YR, \$35,000, Pace, OPEN HANDICAP POST POSITIONS 1-4 DRAWN POST POSITIONS 5-7 ASSIGNED, M, 28.0, 55.4, 1:23.4, 1:52.3, FT

1-**Electrofire (h, 6, Electric Stena--Temples May Day, by Smartest Remark)**, \$3,300 2008 NSPE O-West Wins Stable, CA & David S Miller. B-Arnold W J Fitzgerald, CA.

T-Casie Coleman. D-Brian Sears, \$17,500, Lifetime Record: 89-25-13-13, \$265,323

2-**Saint William A** (h, 10, Presidential Ball--La Saint, by Panorama) O-Larry D Stalbaum & Michael Sorentino Jr. B-J R & M Evans, AS & S M Hinkley, AS & L A Timmins, AS. T-Kimberly Asher. D-Larry Stalbaum, \$8,750

3-**Here We Go Again** (g, 6, Dragon Again--Odds On Jenna, by Jenna's Beach Boy), \$30,000 2008 LEX-SEL O-Bamond Racing LLC. B-Odds On Nourrir. T-Pj Fraley. D-George Brennan, \$4,200

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

Finish Order: Fitz's Z Tam, River Shark, Modern Day Clyde, Proven Lover

To view replay click [here](#)

On a foggy night at Yonkers, Electrofire, pounded down to even money, took over from second position on the backstretch for the first time, set rapid fractions of 55.4 and 1:23.4 and held on to take the Open. Brian Sears was in the bike driving for, among other, co-owner Dave Miller.

Electrofire was shipping in from the Meadowlands, where he was fourth in the A-1 level last time out. The horse claimed two starts back at Yonkers for \$50,000.

7, YR, \$28,000, Pace, WINNERS OVER \$25,000 IN LAST 6 STARTS HANDICAP POST POSITIONS 1-6 DRAWN POST POSITION 7 ASSIGNED, M, 27.1, 55.1, 1:23.2, 1:52.3, FT

Something For Doc (g, 5, Western

Hanover--Allamerican Mocha, by Beach Towel),

\$75,000 2009 SHS-HBG O-Burke Racing Stable LLC & Weaver Brussemi LLC & Strollin Stable. B-Frederick W Hertrich III. T-Ron Burke. D-Matt Kakaley, \$14,000, Lifetime Record: 53-11-15-5, \$362,984

To view replay click [here](#)

8, YR, \$21,000, Pace, NON-WINNERS OF \$18,000 IN LAST 6 STARTS, M, 27.1, 56.1, 1:24.2, 1:53.2, FT

Go West Lucky Cam (r, 7, Camluck--Our May West, by Western Hanover) O-Melvin G Fink & Clifford N Grundy. B-Robert McIntosh Stables Inc, CA & Al McIntosh Holdings Inc, CA & Dwight R Stacey, CA. T-Mike Watson. D-Jordan Stratton, \$10,500, Lifetime Record: 76-16-14-8, \$226,418

To view replay click [here](#)

9, YR, \$21,000, Pace, NON-WINNERS OF \$18,000 IN LAST 6 STARTS, M, 27.4, 57.4, 1:26.0, 1:54.0, FT

Special T Rocks (g, 5, Rocknroll Hanover--Ladys Special Girl, by Artiscape) O-John Cancelliere. B-4 For 3 Stable. T-Thomas Cancelliere. D-Jason Bartlett, \$10,500, Lifetime Record: 57-24-11-5, \$390,064

To view replay click [here](#)

10, YR, \$21,000, Pace, NON-WINNERS OF \$18,000 IN LAST 6 STARTS, M, 28.0, 56.4, 1:24.4, 1:53.1, FT

Sailing Cruise (g, 8, Riverboat King--Mattie Mccheese, by Sportsmaster), \$4,700 2006 SUMS-END O-George E Zitone & Mickey A Peterson. B-Oren Stevens. T-George Zitone. D-George Brennan, \$10,500, Lifetime Record: 146-28-24-21, \$681,170

To view replay click [here](#)

11, YR, \$21,000, Pace, CLAIMING ALLOWANCE \$50,000 3 YO 50%, 4 YO 25%, F&M 20%, M, 26.4, 55.2, 1:24.0, 1:52.3, FT

Roadway (g, 7, Blissfull Hall--Terinatross, by Albatoross) O-Merlin Howse, CA & Casie Coleman Stables Inc, CA. B-Dean E Miller. T-Casie Coleman. D-Brian Sears, \$10,500, Lifetime Record: 137-21-21-29, \$399,266

To view replay click [here](#)

12, YR, \$24,000, Pace, NON-WINNERS OF \$25,000 IN LAST 6 STARTS, 27.4, 56.4, 1:25.0, 1:53.2, FT

Rockin Robert (g, 5, Dragon Again--Rain Dance Kim, by Sportsmaster) O-Thomas Ceraso Jr. B-Jeffrey R Franklin. T-Jack Franklin. D-Jordan Stratton, \$12,000, Lifetime Record: 66-11-13-9, \$148,972

To view replay click [here](#)