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Saturday, February 9, 2013



BITS ON BREEDING

Dean Hoffman

Bargains Abound in Stallion Ranks

A stallion's fee is hardly the only factor a breeder should consider when mating his mares.

I've often heard comments by owners who say, "I can't afford to breed to ABC Hanover, so I'm gonna save a few thousand and breed to XYZ Hanover instead."

That can be false economy.



Dean Hoffman believes that at \$4,000 Ponder is a bargain

When a breeder takes all the costs of producing a yearling ready to sell or to enter training, the stud fee is just one of many cost factors. So why economize? Remember, it costs the same to raise a cheap horse as it does a valuable horse.

Still, that doesn't mean that breeders can totally ignore the cost of a stallion's fee when selecting the right mate for a mare. There are unquestionably some overpriced stallions on the market just as there are some bargain-priced horses. It's the breeder's job to discern the difference. And a bargain, like beauty, is often in the mind of the beholder.

Cantab Hall stands at \$10,000 at Hanover and I think he's an absolute bargain at that price. He was the sport's leading trotting sire last year and I don't see him slowing down. Alas, there are no bookings to Cantab Hanover available, but, believe me, he is a bargain at that price. Ditto for **Rocknroll Hanover**, the leading pacing sire, who stands at \$15,000 at Perretti.

Sure those fees aren't cheap, but if you breed the right mare (and certainly not an ordinary mare) to these stallions

and you're likely to do very well with a bit of luck.

Before selecting a stallion, of course, a breeder must determine a game plan for the resulting foal. Do you want (1) to sell the foal as a yearling or (2) to retain it and train it?

The answer to that question can affect the stallion you select. Let's assume that you're going to sell the resulting foal as a yearling. That elevates the commercial appeal of the stallion to a foremost consideration. What did a stallion's yearlings average last year? Is his appeal likely to endure or dissipate?

How strong and secure is the state or provincial program where the stallion stands? That's also an extremely critical factor.

One way to compare stallions is to list the stud fees and then compare sale averages. If yearlings by a horse with the \$5,000 fee average almost as much as the yearlings sired by a horse with a \$10,000 fee, then give extra attention to the \$5,000 stallion.

(Admittedly, that's a simplistic approach; there are many other factors to weigh.)

Most breeders know that there is a market for discounted breedings to many stallions. That is, a stallion may stand



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Meadowlands	2 nd , Exit 16-W	\$18,000	pps
Meadowlands	3 rd , Exit 16-W	\$18,000	pps

PP's courtesy of www.trackmaster.com

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for an advertised \$7,500 fee, but breedings to that horse may be available for \$5,000 or less. That's simply a matter of supply and demand. If a horse can get a full book of mares at \$7,500, there aren't likely to be any discounted breedings available.

Years ago, a stallion's stud fee went only one way: up. Breeding farms were loath to reduce a stud fee. "You cut a stallion's fee and you might as well cut his throat," one stallion manager said. It was seen as an admission that a stallion had lost his luster.

Those days are gone and now breedings are sold at varying discounts. It pays for a breeder to do some legwork and find out what's available on the market.

If you are planning to keep the foal you get and train and race it, you need not worry so much about the commercial considerations. Sure, you'd like to have foals by the top stallions, but by eschewing the yearling market you can seek out overlooked stallions.



Dean Hoffman thinks, at \$15,000, the price is right for Rocknroll Hanover

Dig into the sire statistics that are readily available to see where the hidden gems lie. Don't bother looking at the 2013 stats; at this stage of the year they're meaningless. Go back and look at 2012 and place particular emphasis on average earnings per foal by stallions. Don't be carried away by those stallions with the highest overall earnings; you're more interested in the average earnings per foal. It is very meaningful statistic.

(I've always thought that harness racing should publish the average earnings per start for trainers and drivers, too. A trainer with \$3 million in earnings is more impressive than one with \$1 million in earnings, but

how does your impression change when you realize that the \$3 million trainer has started horses in 10 times as many races? That's when you realize that the trainer with the lower overall earnings has a much higher average earnings per start. And that's what counts to owners. Owners also need to look at a trainer's Universal Trainer Ratings number. Would you rather employ a trainer with a batting average of .350 or one with an anemic .250 average? That question answers itself.

If you look at the average earnings of a sire's 2-year-old trotters last year, you get Cantab Hall on top, **Credit Winner** (at Blue Chip) third and **Broadway Hall** (at Fashion Farms), **Andover Hall** (at Hanover), and **Donato Hanover** (Hanover) among the leaders. No surprises there. But you also find **CR Commando** (at Winbak), and **RC Royalty** (Morrisville) ranking very high. These are stallions that merit consideration because they're doing well without much fanfare and perhaps without the benefit of many blue-blooded consorts.

Look at the leading sires of 3-year-old pacers last year, based on average earnings. Sure, you get **Bettor's Delight**



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TIME TO SHINE
**MOHEGAN
SUN**
AT POCONO DOWNS

(Blue Chip,) Rocknroll Hanover and **Art Major** (Blue Chip) in the top ten, but you'll also find **Ponder** (Diamond Creek), **American Ideal** (managed by Brittany, at Blue Chip), and **Yankee Cruiser** (at Hanover). If you're looking to breed to race, these latter three stallions can be bargains.

There are many factors to consider. Be wary of a stallion that benefits from one foal earning so much that it skews the numbers. And you must remember that some stallions rank high because their offspring compete in soft sires stakes environments.

As I survey the stallion scene, I see many that I consider bargains. I'd certainly jump on Ponder at \$4,000 in Pennsylvania. **Conway Hall** (Morrisville) is one of the few proven trotting sires in New York and I think he's priced right at \$7,500. Two rivals on the track, **Muscle Massive** (Hanover) and **Lucky Chucky** (Perretti), are unproven but they're reasonably priced at \$7,500 and \$5,000, respectively, in the Keystone State.

The uncertainty in Ontario has prompted a price cut in stud fees there and bargains are found across the province. Racing surely isn't going to wither and die in Ontario, so check out the bargain-priced young stallions there, and even the reasonable fees on old lions like Cambest and Angus Hall.

Do your homework, check the yearling averages and the sires stats, and you'll find bargains of your own. Scratch beneath the surface and you may earn bragging rights in breeding a champion by a modestly-priced stallion.

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Proposed Legislation Would Alter Eligibility for Kentucky Sires Stakes

by Tom LaMarra, USTA Web Newsroom Correspondent
Lexington, KY --- A Kentucky lawmaker has introduced legislation that would effectively allow the progeny of Standardbreds not sired by Kentucky stallions to participate in the Kentucky Sires Stakes program.

The bill, filed by Republican Sen. Damon Thayer, strikes statutory language that defines a Kentucky-bred Standardbred as one having been sired by a stallion standing in the state. It allows the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission to adopt rules to determine eligibility, residency, and registration of mares and their progeny.

Standardbred stakeholders in the state have held meetings to find ways to beef up the Kentucky Sires Stakes, which is supported by harness racing's share of the Breeders' Incentive Fund. They money, about \$2 million a year, fund the sires stakes program.

Advocates would like to open the program to horses sired by stallions in other states. There would be residency requirements for mares.

"Some of the Standardbred guys said the sires stakes as structured are not attracting stallions to the state," Thayer said. "Statutory and regulatory changes are needed to alter the definition of Kentucky-bred horses.

"I have some reservations about that, but it is their program, and they feel it needs to be changed."

Eliminations and finals for the Kentucky Sires Stakes, for 2- and 3-year-old trotters and pacers, are raced in August and early September at The Red Mile each year.

ORC Announces Continuation of Horse Improvement Program For 2013 (press release from ORC)

Rod Seiling, Chair of the Ontario Racing Commission (ORC) announced today that planning and implementation of the 2013 Horse Improvement Program (HIP) is moving forward.



Ontario Racing Commission

Funding of up to \$30 million will be used to develop the Standardbred and

Thoroughbred components of HIP, through work that will take place in the near future consulting with stakeholders and the Advisory Groups.

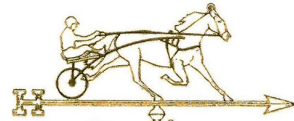
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"The Ontario government and industry continue to work toward ensuring a future for horse racing in the province of Ontario", said Chair Seiling. "This funding envelope is in keeping with the position of the Horse Racing Industry Transition Panel -- that HIP plays an important role in a sustainable horse racing industry."

"The Horse Improvement Program is another milestone on the road to a renewed, sustainable future for horse racing in Ontario," said Ted McMeekin, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "This program will provide important support for that transition."

The 2013 HIP will be developed based on the program's existing mandate and structure, both of which have served Ontario well for many decades. The program will be reviewed for changes necessary to reflect the new industry in the post Slots-At-Racetracks Program environment.

While consultation with the Advisory Groups did begin in mid-December to address the urgency of 2013 breeding decisions, efforts will now be accelerated.

Wendy Hoogeveen, HIP Program Administrator, observed that the Ontario Horse Racing sector will be faced with many challenges over the next number of years.

"But I firmly believe the future is bright for the Ontario-bred horse in this province. The Horse Improvement Program is well positioned to serve the interests of the stakeholders. And it will do so while providing government with clearly demonstrated benefits for its investment in the industry and for the economy of Ontario."



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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All correspondence to be handled by the NJ office as usual.

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It's Time to Say Goodbye to Some Good People

I remember when I was a kid, growing up in a one-industry town. The main employment driver was the mine. It supplied good wages and good benefits; it sponsored sports teams and was a fabric of the town. Like most heavy industries, though, boom-busts occurred, and when the latter happened people would have to be laid off.

My dad started in the mines at a young age. He took an accounting designation at night and moved up the ladder over many years. In the 1980's he was in charge of most of the staff. When the inevitable layoff time came it was not a nice time to be in the house. He had to let go not a number on a union card, but friends. They were hard working, no nonsense, show-up-on-time people, who didn't ask for anything but a day's pay for working a day. They would have to take their families and leave town, trying to find work wherever they could.

I thought about those times as a kid this week as the notices really started to fly at Woodbine Entertainment. Bruce Murray and Andrew MacDonald were let go, this on the heels of other layoffs in the television department, previously announced in December.

A lot of you know Bruce, and you know he was more than a number on an employee card. On twitter on Tuesday morning tweets like these showed up:

"Feel bad for Bruce Murray. Super nice guy and been there since 1989. I remember when Kathy hired him. Sucks." - Mike Adams

"Me too. Can't find a nicer person"- Lori Ferguson
Later on when the story was posted to Standardbred Canada, it continued:

"My very best wishes Bruce. You have a special way about you" - Jack Wilton

"I'm upset. Bruce was someone I enjoyed doing business with and was one reason I raced my horses in Ontario. It's rare to find individuals like Bruce in the racing industry." - Richard Young

I feel the same way. Walking into Mohawk Bruce would be there, likely smiling with someone. He rarely had a cross word for or about anyone; in public anyway. He represented Woodbine Entertainment very, very well. The Mohawk venue is a jewel of the Woodbine Entertainment group and summers there were as good as summers at any track, anywhere. Bruce had a lot to do with that.

The sad part of it all is that in Ontario this is just the beginning. The layoffs, just like those in a mining town, are



LUCKY CHUCKY

CHUCKY PERFECT for PENNSYLVANIA

by Bob Marks

When you think about it, Lucky Chucky and the commonwealth of Pennsylvania are almost a match made in heaven considering how the 2010 trotter of the year excelled over the five eighths tracks that dominate the Keystone state.

At two, one of Chucky's better efforts came in the \$450,000 Valley Victory at what was then Harrahs Chester winning easily in his richest victory of the season.

Then at three, Lucky Chucky set a record with a totally dominant 8 length 1:53 score in the \$500,000 Colonial over the same course.

Later on, Lucky Chucky would win the \$970,000 Canadian Trotting Classic and was voted trotter of the year for 2010.

Lucky Chucky, like likely Horse of the Year for 2012 Chapter Seven is by Windsong's Legacy the first trotting triple crown winner in over 30 years.

Lucky Chucky will stand for \$5,000 at Perretti Farms of Pennsylvania.

All booking arrangements will be handled by the NJ office.

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The sad part of it all is that in Ontario this is just the beginning. The layoffs, just like those in a mining town, are happening as we speak.

The teller you liked at Hiawatha Horse Park won't be there the next time you visit.

The tattoo person at Windsor doesn't have a job.

The feed man from down the road who showed up with a smile anytime you needed him is no longer around.

The Hot Dog vendor at beautiful Fort Erie is working at the casino in Niagara Falls, if he's lucky.

The first trainer you ever gave a horse decided to retire. A driver you like to bet at Grand River who had dreams of making it big has decided to go back to college.

The lady that gave you a tour of Seelster Farms last year isn't employed anymore.

Over the past eight months or so in Ontario, people have argued about governments, slot money, customers, lottery and gaming and about a hundred other things. That's fine. But we seem to have been so hell-bent focusing on the problem, many haven't for a moment stopped to think about the people involved in horse racing - the people we know, we grew up with. Just like a miner who works his ass off for a day's pay for a hard day's work, most of the people in harness racing do exactly the same if not more. No matter how you feel about slot machines, they didn't ask for this.

This year, and next, and the year after next, our friends are going to be unceremoniously kicked to the curb like an old shoe. A good deal of them will have nowhere to go, because they have no other skill.

Who knows, maybe it's a clarion call to band together to change this sport for the better. That's what friends should do when they're up against it. But this week I've thought about the people that won't be there in the future; my harness racing pals. And like the tweet from Mike Adams above said, it sucks.

STATS CORNER

Amount Wagered on Top French Horse Races in 2012

In France, the trotter is king. In 2012, 21.3 million Euros (\$28.4 million) was wagered on the Prix d'Amerique. It easily surpassed the next most popular betting race, the Arc de Triomphe, which handled 18 million Euros. In fact, seven of the top 10 races in 2012 when it comes to wagering were harness races. With the amounts bet converted to dollars, a look at the top betting races in France in 2012:

Race	Type	Wagered
Prix d'Amerique	Harness	\$28.4 million
Arc de Triomphe	Thoroughbred	\$24 million
Prix de Lille	Harness	\$21.9 million
Prix de Belgique	Harness	\$21.2 million
Prix de Bourgogne	Harness	\$20.8 million
Prix de Cornulier	Ridden trotters	\$20.8 million
Criterium des 3 ans	Harness	\$20.7 million
Criterium Continental	Harness	\$20.6 million
Grande Course de Haies	Hedges	\$20.6 million
Prix de Maisons-Laffitte	Thoroughbred	\$15.3 million

CANCELLATIONS



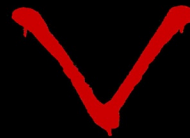
Cancellations Abound In Nemo

The massive stowstorm Nemo on the East Coast of the U.S. and Canada has forced the cancellations of the following cards Friday: Yonkers, Meadowlands, Woodbine and Western Fair. Buffalo Raceway moved its Friday qualifiers to Saturday morning. As of last night, the Meadowlands had made no decision regarding Saturday's card. Yonkers will decide the fate of Saturday night's card this morning.

Never mind X. Britney's out.

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Race 7, A-2

DROP RED showed speed in his return to the races last out and backed up a bit late in a race he had to need. Classy type is worth a swing from the rail in his second start back; price should be fair.

WESTERN TSUNAMI just keeps on winning for the hot barn and that's two straight races in this one was raging late with identical :26:2 final quarters. This field is far more difficult than last weeks, but the recently removed \$20K claimer just might be sharp enough to handle it.

MUSSELSFRMBRUSSELS folded two back but then reversed his form in a rally last week to be second to a heavily backed winner; rallying tactics again? **MAJOR BELLE** goes for driver and trainer that had a very big Thursday; **FOOLS GOLD** goes second time Ford and has been here before.

Race 8, B-1

PERRITO CALIENTE invaded from Balmoral last Saturday and coasted to a 1:50:4 win, doing it with ease in his first start for Burke. This one does have class to him also and in a B-1 field that doesn't look much more difficult than the B-2 field he toyed with last week, he'd have to regress significantly for him not to win here. **Best.**

MCCEDDES has a well documented history over this track and now finds himself in the barn of Cito; a number of those recent Woodbine miles would rate favorably in this spot.

ELUSIVE REWARD goes first start off the claim for barn making it's first start here this meet; raced against a key winner when last seen.

NO BU is having a hard time finding the winners circle; **FREDDY DAY HANOVER** is capable on his best.

Race 9, B-2

LITTLE GOLD RING will get the upset call in a wide open race as Dave Miller's tough call over #9. This one makes his second start back after getting caught in that 1:50:4 mile last week; the winner of that race might very well come right back to beat the B-1's tonight (race 8). Doesn't seem slower than anyone else.

MACHAPELO is another making his second start back; also his second start with Toscano. Now at four, seeks to regain his freshman season talent. Possible.

PAINTED BLACK goes for Polisenno who is 6 for 18 in wins with another four to place; off to a very fast start. This one was bet down to 3/1 when last seen here against better.

PICTURE ME might come back around one of these nights and **FIVEKNUCKLESHUFFLE** is turning into a disappointment here thus far.

Race 10, N/W or \$15,000 Life

OUTWARD BOUND made his first start a couple weeks ago since September and always raced from well back. Rollins now lists Miller to drive; could be telling and I'll take include as a flyer.

ARC DE TRIUMPH is one I've liked the last couple weeks and he raced well last time out; only possible concern is that Schnittker chooses to drive himself tonight.

LONG FIGHT HANOVER actually took a lot of support last week with DiNozzi driving and then broke; can beat me if he can.

WHAT'S THE STORY can stay close from the rail for Lachance;

MCGENIOUS at least goes for a barn that had a couple dominant winners a couple nights ago.

\$6 ticket (\$1 base): 5-9 / 4 / 3-4-5 / 3

\$24 ticket (\$1 base): 1-5 / 4 / 3-4-5-9 / 3-6-9

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 Sagebrush Carl Becker/U of IL 2,000
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Abs Beach Boy Stacy Ruddick 1,000
 Airzoom Lindy Ivy Lane Fm/Airzm Lindy Llc 2,000
 Always A Virgin Mitchel Skolnick/Bob Boni 3,500
 Artist's View Bill Rufenact & DM Stables 2,500
 Big Stick Lindy Pond-A-Acres 3,000
 Celebrity Surfer(live cover) Mike Bradley 750
 Cincinnati Kid Dojea Stables/Ivy Lane 2c,000
 Copeland Comet Amos Wenderd (live cover) 1,200
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 Jenna's Beach Boy L&L.Devisser/JBB Syn 2,500
 JT Arturo (live cover) Mike Bradley 750
 Keystone Blitz Pond-A-Acres 1,500
 Make My Day(live cover) Mike Bradley 1,500
 Mr Cantab Mr Cantab Syndicate 3,000
 Palone Ranger Dojea Stables/Ivy Lane 2,000
 Panspacificflight Jake Miller/Schwartz Bdg Fm 3,500
 Primetime Cavier (live) Daniel Graber 1,500
 Pro North (live cover) Dojea Stables 1,000
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 Sand Shooter Bill Sanders/Jerry Silva 2,500
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NEW JERSEY

If I Can Dream Jeffrey Brooks/DeoVolente 5,000

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 Conway Hall Walnut Hall Ltd 7,500
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 Sand Vic Trond Smedshammer 3,500

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 Amigo Hall Blair Burgess 2,500
 Big Bad John Winchester Baye Acres, Inc 4,000
 Big Rigs Ed Mullinax 3,500
 Believeinbruiser Cool Winds Farm 2,000
 B Strike Three Ben Robards 1,500
 Charley Barley J Scott Ezzo 2,500
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 Foreclosure N Burke Racing LLC 3,000
 Gunthatwonthwest Richard Copp 1,500
 Home Stretch Hagemeyer Frm/MGRacing 1,500
 Keystone Nordic Bonley Farm 2,000
 Lionhunter D. Anderson/Dublin Valley 2,500
 Manhardt Snow Ridge Farm 2,000
 May I Say Hagemeyer Farm 2,000
 McArdle Hickory Lane Farm 3,500
 Memphis Flash Cool Winds Farm 1,000
 Powerful Toy Jeff Stacy & OSU/ATI 1,750
 Sheffield NgaireUmholtz/UmholtzRcg 1,000
 Southfork Marsh Valley Stdbs 1,000
 Three Olives Jeff Stacy & OSU/ATI 1,750
 Tom Cango Cool Winds Farm 2,500
 Triumphant Caviar Jim Gallagher/Chris Beaver 3,000
 Woodstock Sugar Valley Farm 2,000
 World of Rocknroll D. McDuffee/Hagemeyer Fm 2,250

PENNSYLVANIA

Cam's Card Shark Jeff Snyder/Hanover Shoe 5,000
 Delmarvelous John Celi/Three J's Stble 3,500
 Dragon Again Ed & Janet Mullinax 6,000
 Explosive Matter Adam Victor & Son 6,000
 Glidemaster Blair Burgess 4,000
 Lear Jetta Nandi Veterinary Associates 4,000
 Moon Beam Delaware Valley College 3,000
 Ponder John Fielding/Diamond Crk 4,000
 Shark Gesture Norman Smiley 4,000
 Sierra Kosmos Richard Beinhauer 1,500
 Tarver Hanover Delaware Valley College 2,500
 Western Ideal Hanover Shoe Farms 7,500
 Xactly Hanover Delaware Valley College 2,000

ONTARIO

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 Big Jim Jim Carr 5,000
 Camluck R.McIntosh/Seelster Farm 7,500
 Federal Flex Seelster Farm 3,500
 Holiday Road Deo Volente Farms 3,500
 Justice Hall Ecurie Gaetan Bono, Inc 3,500

How To Bid: Bid online at www.ongait.com February 11th through 2:00 p.m. Friday February 15th or five minutes after the last bid comes in. (Open ended auction! Contact ongait@aol.com for details and also about the texting notification service) Minimum raise is \$100. Winning bidders owe a refundable 10%, minimum \$100 deposit. Balance is due with a live foal. (Please do not bid for mares over 20 yrs old, ones that have been barren two or more consecutive years, or those that are already booked.) FMI email dot@horseadoption.com www.horseadoption.com