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Sunday, February 22, 2015

NHL Stars Daniel and Henrik Sedin Looking to Conquer US Racing

By Bill Finley

They're already talking about the possibility of winning the Hambletonian some day, but that shouldn't come as a surprise. When you've proven to be among the best hockey players of your generation, have made it to the Stanley Cup finals and have won the biggest horse race in Sweden you should have lofty goals.



The Sedin brothers, Daniel (left) and Henrik (right), have dreams of winning the Hambletonian

The hockey playing Sedin brothers, Daniel and Henrik, have set their sights on a new goal: winning major harness races in the U.S. The two, both members of the Vancouver Canucks and natives of Sweden, purchased two yearlings last year at Lexington. They paid \$105,000 for a Donato Hanover colt named Songndance Hanover and \$160,000 for a Credit Winner colt named Curious De Vie.

Both horses are currently at the Sunshine Meadows training facility in Florida under the care of trainer Ken Oscarsson, getting ready for their 2-year-old campaigns. Oscarsson is overseeing their training, but the man in charge is top Swedish trainer Robert Bergh, who picked out both horses at Lexington.

"We always looked at the big race over here, especially the Hambletonian," Henrik said. "We brought one of our horses (Amour Ami) over here to the Meadowlands a few years back and had lot of fun with it. This is a new market for us. We've raced in France and in Sweden and wanted to try the U.S. now."

Daniel said it was Bergh who came up with the idea of setting up a small stable in the U.S. He is among the top trainers in Sweden and wanted to have some sort of presence in the U.S. For the first time ever he came to the Lexington sale with the idea of buying racing prospects for the U.S. He bought five horses at Lexington, two of them for the Sedins. All are trotting colts and the other three are

by Lucky Chucky, Muscle Hill and Donato Hanover.

"We've always had horses back in Sweden," Daniel said. "Probably the biggest trainer in Sweden right now is Robert Bergh and we have a bunch of horses with him. He wanted to make an effort to get something good over here. He asked us if we were willing to buy a few horses and we did. With us being over here for so much of the year it makes it more fun and hopefully we can be successful."

The two most popular sports in Sweden are harness racing and hockey and several Swedish hockey players have owned trotters, among them Mats Sundin, Henrik Zetterberg and Peter Forsberg. Sundin was the co-owner of Rotation, who won the 2004 Nat Ray and Maple Leaf Trot.

But the Sedin brothers weren't seriously introduced to the sport until they began their professional careers as teenagers with the Swedish team Modo Hockey. They had a teammate who owned a horse and they went in with him as part owners. They were instantly captured by the sport and soon went out on their own as owners.

Teaming up with Bergh, one of their first top horses was Amour Ami. They brought him to North America, where he made three starts, including one in the 2009 Nat Ray. He failed to hit the board in any of his races here.

(continued on next page)

Start Spreading the News...
 2014 was another *banner year* for the New York breeding program!

- ▶ Number of mares bred *increased 15%*
- ▶ *Credit Winner* led all trotting sires at the yearling sales
- ▶ *JK She'salady* was named Horse of the Year in the US and Canada
- ▶ The average price paid for NY bred yearlings has *increased 19.5%* since 2012

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Their biggest success came with Nahar, who won the 2013 Elitlopp, defeating, among others, Sebastian K. Now 10, he has won 32 of 95 starts, earning \$1.32 million.

"Winning the Elitlopp was a dream come true," Daniel said. "I got asked after we won that race how it compared to winning a hockey game. It's so different because in a horse race you can't do anything about the outcome. You watch, you're nervous the whole day. On the ice, you can do something to influence the result. When you are watching a race it is such an incredible feeling leading up to race and watching them it is nerve wracking."

Said Henrik: "You know how big it is, the Elitlopp. It was such a thrill to win it. But I enjoy winning any race. It doesn't matter if it is \$5,000 or \$500,000, I always get a thrill out of it. To see your horse in top shape and beating the best horses in the world, that is amazing."

When you spend a combined \$265,000 on two horses at the yearling sales you know you are taking a risk, but also that you might just hit the jackpot. The Sedins say they'll be happy no matter how the horses turn out but after you've won an Elitlopp you're not exactly looking to win a non-winners of two pari-mutuel at Vernon Downs with your pricey yearlings. They want stars. Whether or not that happens is largely up to Bergh.

"With the horses we bought we had no input," Daniel said. "Robert picks them out. We have trusted him since Day One and he makes all the decisions. He has been really successful for us. We bought a few 5 year olds back in Sweden and some of them turned out to be among the best horses in Europe, so we trust him."

While they're in North America the Sedins don't have much time for anything else but hockey. Daniel said he's never attended a live race at a North American track, but



The Sedin's Elitlopp winner Nahar

did once go to Fraser Downs in Vancouver to watch simulcasting. But that's likely to change with the brothers having horses here. When the Canucks made a swing through Florida they visited Sunshine

Meadows to see their two new prizes.

They're not sure how far they will take things when it comes to a U.S. stable. They will continue to have horses in Sweden because of their roots there and their family, which they say enjoys watching the horses race. But they admit that if they are successful with their U.S. based horses that will likely lead them to buy more.

"Being over here you do follow the races over here," Henrik said. "We went to Florida and that gave us a chance to see our horses down there That's what we like the most, to be around them. It's nice during the season to be able to see them. We'll see what will happen. It's one of those

things that will depend on how successful we are. Robert is such a good trainer and Ken has done a good job. We want to stay in harness racing for a long time. We see the U.S. market as a good racing market."

The Sedins are 34 and Vancouver, with the 13th best record in the NHL, is not having a particularly good year. Their chances of winning a Stanley Cup are starting to run thin. But the Hambletonian? With a little luck and if they keep buying expensive yearlings, there's nothing standing in their way.

Tune in to the Bob Heyden Report for the best in harness racing talk, every Saturday at 10:15 a.m. Eastern on the Eclipse Award-winning horse racing radio program

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2015 World Driving Championships - Leg 1
Courtesy of Harness Racing Australia

USA representative Tim Tetrick drew first blood in the 2015 World Driving Championship steering Shannonsblast to victory in the first of the twenty heats. The first meeting was conducted at Tabcorp Park Menangle and Tetrick looked at home on the spacious 1400 metre circuit sending his horse forward from the outside barrier. Australia's Chris Alford was able to get off the inside late to finish second, securing important points.

"Big Win! Thanks to everyone for all the support. It's going to be a long week but this helps," Tetrick said through Twitter.

The second heat saw the international drivers compete on trotters and it was no surprise to see one of the European drivers take out the event. Finland's Mika Forss drove the Darren Hancock trained On Thunder Road and it fought strongly in the straight to hold off a late challenge from the Guillermo Adrover driven Kyvalley Blur.

Points after the first two heats were:

Tim Tetrick 21
Chris Alford 19
Mika Forss 18
Guillermo Adrover 17
Jody Jamieson 16
Dexter Dunn 12
Knud Monster 10
Vidar Hop 8
Tony Le Beller 7
Pierre Vercryusse 4

Tim Tetrick celebrates in the winner's circle after his first Australian win

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- Tony Le Beller 7
- Pierre Vercryusse 4



The Championship heads next to Newcastle for a further three heats. Mika Forss looks set to continue his charge up the leader board. Forss will drive Son Of A Star in heat three, a horse that has won and been placed twice in its

past five starts. In heat four Forss will partner Go Lassie Go for Shane Tritton, the leading trainer in New South Wales. While in the final heat of the evening he will drive short priced favorite Saturday.

2015 World Driving Championships - Leg 2

Three heats for day 3 of the WDC were held at Newcastle, and the lead has been taken by Chris Alford (Australia) with 1 win in the 3rd heat, and a 2nd place finish in the 4th heat moving him from 19 points after leg 1 up to 52 points.

The North American fan update has Tim Tetrick in 2nd place and Jody Jamieson in 7th place currently, but with 15 heats to go, there are up to 255 points up for grabs just for 1st place finishers alone.

* **Note:** for the full WDC rules and regulations, including the point breakdown [click here](#).

Defending champion Pierre Vercryusse (France) has a lot of ground to make up in last place.

The next leg of the WDC will be contested at Wagga and will include 7 heats (6 through 12).

Results for all heats are on Harness Racing Australia:
[Heats 1 & 2](#) | [Heats 3, 4 & 5](#)

Replays for all heats are in the WDC Vimeo channel:
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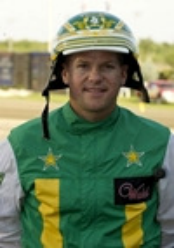








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World Driving Championship Standings As Of Heat 5

Chris Alford Australia 1st Place		Points: 52	Vidar Hop Norway 6th Place		Points: 30
Tim Tetrick United States 2nd Place		Points: 47	Jody Jamieson Canada 7th Place		Points: 29
Mika Forss Finland 3rd Place		Points: 43	Knud Mönster Denmark 8th Place		Points: 28
Tony Le Beller France 4th Place		Points: 33	Dexter Dunn New Zealand 9th Place		Points: 19
Guillermo Adrover Spain 5th Place		Points: 32	Pierre Vercausse (Defending Champ) France 10th Place		Points: 17

2015 World Driving Championship Schedule

2015-02-21	Saturday	Tabcorp Park Menangle	Heats: 1 & 2
2015-02-22	Sunday	Newcastle	Heats: 3, 4 & 5
2015-02-24	Tuesday	Wagga	Heats: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12
2015-02-25	Wednesday	Bathurst	Heats: 13, 14, 15 & 16
2015-02-26	Thursday	Penrith	Heats: 17, 18 & 19
2015-03-01	Sunday	Tabcorp Park Menangle	Final Heat (20)

Yonkers Cancels Entire Card; Meadowlands Throws In Towel After One Race

With still more nasty weather hitting the Northeast



On a nasty night at the Meadowlands they got in just one race before cancelling

yesterday, harness racing virtually came to a halt in the New York metropolitan area.

Yonkers cancelled its entire card, the seventh weather related cancellation this season. The Meadowlands tried to get through its program but gave up

after the first race.

That happened to be the race in Argentinean shipper Chucaro Acero BC made his US debut after going 18 for 18 in South America. He finished fourth, but trainer Julie Miller was on the record beforehand that she didn't believe she had the horse anywhere near at his best because he had had so many problems adapting the U.S.

Last night's card at the Meadowlands was supposed to include five stakes races. They will be now be held next Saturday.

The Meadows also canceled yesterday.

Oh, well, just 25 days until spring.

Favourites Sweep Ontario Boys & Girls Finals *Courtesy of Woodbine Entertainment Group*

TORONTO, ON - Ontario sired four-year-olds were the main attraction Saturday night at Woodbine Racetrack in a pair of winter series finals.

The \$45,000 Ontario Boys final for four-year-old pacers and the 44,600 Ontario Girls final for four-year-old pacing mares were co-main events on Saturday night's 11-race card.

All eyes were on heavy favourite Nirvana Seelster in the Ontario Boys final, as he went for the series sweep.

Driven by Phil Hudon, Nirvana Seelster sprinted out quickly to the front to grab his usual spot on the lead and would cruise along in control cutting out fractions of :27, :56 and 1:24.4

In the stretch, Nirvana Seelster continued to pace strong and was never in any danger of surrendering his lead. He posted a final-quarter of :27.4 to score a length and a quarter victory in 1:52.3.

Ideal Jet got up to finish second, while Kindofabigdeal took the show spot.

A son of Camluck, Nirvana Seelster is trained by Bill Budd for owner Bruce Davy. The four-year-old pacer swept the Ontario Boys series by winning each leg on the front-end.

Nirvana Seelster now has three wins from seven starts this year and ten career victories overall. The winner's

share of the purse pushes his career bankroll over \$145,000.

Nirvana Seelster returned \$2.80 to win.

In the Ontario Girls final, Artistic Fusion was sent off as the heavy 2/5 favourite and did not disappoint winning in 1:53.4.

A first-half battle saw a parked out Regally Ready finally clear to the front before the half ahead of Performing Art. However, Jack Moiseyev wasted no time charging Bet Ya up from fourth to overtake the lead from Regally Ready at the half in :55.

Meanwhile, Artistic Fusion and driver Sylvain Filion paced along fourth and made a first-over move on the way to the final turn. Artistic Fusion and Bet Ya would slug it out past the three-quarter pole in 1:23.4 to bring the field into the lane.

In the stretch, Artistic Fusion powered by Bet Ya and paced on to the win the Ontario Girls final by a length and a half.

A hard-closing Jakardez got up for second, while Bet Ya finished third.

A daughter of Artistic Fella, Artistic Fusion captured the first leg of the series, but then saw her four-race win streak snapped in last week's second leg by Bet Ya. The series finale victory improves her record to five wins from six starts in 2015.

Artistic Fusion is trained by Joe Agostino for owner Mike Foote and now has an Ontario Girls title to go along her

(continued on next page)

2015 PRIX D'ETE

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Blizzard series triumph a month ago.

Artistic Fusion now has 11 career victories and earnings of over \$142,000.

She paid \$2.90 to win.

In order to be eligible to the Ontario Boys and Girls series, the Ontario sired four-year-olds had to be non-winners of \$100,000 lifetime or \$50,000 in 2014 as of October 31, 2014.



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Craw Stickers

No matter who you are, or what sport you watch or bet, there are certain things that stick in your craw. Some are a personal preference, like for example, my beloved hockey switching to home darks from home whites (so they could sell more shirts), which annoys me to no end. Others might be about the rules of the game, where in another one of my favorite sports - football - a defensive lineman grazes the head of a quarterback with his pinky, and he gets flagged for 15 yards. Gosh, I hate that.

I am sure you have yours like I have mine in your favorite sports.

In harness racing there are plenty of these craw stickers. All you have to do is visit a chat board, or twitter or read the letters to the editor here at Harness Racing Update; they're everywhere. And everyone has an opinion; sometimes a diametrically opposed one.

This week I thought I'd share a few of my favorites for this wacky sport we call harness racing.

The Passing Lane

Y'know, some things on paper sound like a good idea: New Coke, hiring Lance Armstrong to speak at Clean Sports conference, Milli Vanilli. But, on-paper and in-reality are two different things.

Me, you, any horse owner or bettor really hates getting boxed in. When it happens, some of us jump up and down, some swear, some owners and trainers boot the driver off the horse, some throw a program at a TV monitor. It's pretty annoying. Fixing that sounded like a good idea, so someone came up with the passing lane.

Immediately after its introduction, the results of the passing lane were apparent. Horses in the two and three hole could sit, with almost impunity. Some got out fine, and won. TV screens at simo-centers thanked the rule maker.

Mission accomplished.

The problem is, the passing lane stinks.

Harness racing in 2015 is a speed game, and if you let virtually any horse have his or her way on the front end, they are tough to beat. Currently the number one complaint by many harness racing fans is the fact there is no movement, and no injecting of the pace in the race, allowing closers to have a better chance. Sure we don't get boxed as much, but a lot of the races are a form-filled, boring snoozefest. A good deal of that has to do with the passing lane.

Every passing lane, from here to Sweden, to Australia to a planet somewhere that we have not discovered yet that races outer space standardbreds, should all be removed. After they are removed, the horse in the two hole will have to pull at or before the three quarters if the driver feels he or she is on the bit. A horse in the three hole likely won't sit either, because getting boxed in with a live horse is no fun. Pace will be injected into the race, and we should see more, not less movement.

Pylons

Maybe someone can help me out with this because I'm stumped: Is there any sport on earth where you are allowed to leave the field of play and score a goal, get a touchdown, or score whatever is scored in cricket, and it counts? I can't think of one.



In harness racing, when a sulky leaves the field of play - the track - there seems to be quite the conundrum. Three people sit in a little room and wind and rewind tape, slow motion, fast motion, sometimes for ten minutes. Twitter is abuzz talking about a pylon rule that no one is sure is correct, or wrong. Bill Finley

grumbles. Jeff Gural gets bored and checks cobalt results. Sure the sulky left the field of play because a wheel went inside a pylon, but:

(continued on next page)

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p,2,1:49.4 (\$94,547)
SOME BEACHSOMEWHERE - MUST SEE - ARTSPLACE

- i) Was it on the turn?
- ii) Did he go inside two?
- iii) Did he go inside four?
- iv) Did it have an effect on the finish?
- v) What's your favorite color?

I think I understand the pylon rule, and you probably do, but we both might be wrong. We did not go to pylon infraction judging school.

My new pylon rule is simple: If you leave the course you are disqualified.

A foul ball doesn't have to bounce twice to be a foul ball. A pass is not complete if a receiver's toe, not whole foot is on the line. I'd use a cricket example, but as you read above I don't know cricket. Rules where we don't need a degree in physics to understand them work best. Let's get rid of the pylon rule.

Quid Pro Quo, Passing Up the Inside

Quid pro quo is not a bad thing in real life. Just this week I helped my next door neighbor shovel nine thousand inches of snow off of his deck, and he helped me shovel mine. But quid pro quo in harness racing is no good at all. We see it in a lot of races. A leader drifts, letting the horse in the two hole or three hole up the wood. We all know why this happens, so let's not even make up some pure-as-driven-snow reason. It's quid pro quo.

The problem with quid pro quo in harness racing is that it's not quid pro quo for bettors who pump \$2 billion a year through the windows. If Joe bets the four in race three and the driver of the leader lets him up the rail, it's good for Joe, but bad for Pete who bet the first over horse who was beat by a lip. When quid pro quo time comes a day later, Pete is at work and Joe is at the ball game.

Harness racing is a sport that depends on people betting for its survival; well, in places there aren't slots, anyway. Things need to be settled on the track within the rules of a gambling sport, because without rules, there is no gambling sport. Holding your line in the stretch is not too much to ask.

Post Drag

Here's a pop quiz. It's zero minutes to post. Do you:

- i) Rush to the windows to get in your bets?
- ii) Ask your wife "please let the dog out?! I need to get my bets in. It's zero minutes to post!"
- iii) Do your taxes, read a chapter of War and Peace, or balance your checkbook, then start handicapping the race



Harness racing, the only sport where zero could equal 2, 4, even 7...but never zero

I understand, and you understand why post drags happen and why they work. But we don't have to like them.

In a perfect world there would be a neat little clock and that clock would count down to an accurate post time. The dog can get walked after the race, we

could balance the checkbook after the races, and War and Peace could wait until bedtime.

Ah, in a perfect world.

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Kudos to the Ontario Tracks

Mr. Finley's current article about the affairs of Canadian racing on the WEG circuit shows what tracks can do together when faced with a bad situation. It's all about cooperation, which is currently missing between the tracks, horsemen & USTA. Obviously, as has been stated before, the slot tracks are living high (with the slot largess bestowed upon them) for the benefit of the horseman and nobody else. In my humble opinion (this is not going to happen) tracks have to get together and coordinate racing dates. The piece de resistance would be that out of the current tracks--Yonkers, Harrah's, Pocono, Meadows, Dover--at least two of them would close. Logical choices would be Harrah's & Dover. Way too many tracks and not enough horses and these are the most vulnerable.

(continued on next page)



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Hopefully, I live long enough to see a casino/racino at the Meadowlands run by HardRock/Gural which will then change harness racing for the best. Then, the purses will go up significantly and the greedy horsemen will flock to the current largess. This, in turn will decrease the handle at the current slot tracks causing increased financial pressure on them and the end of their high living. Let's be realistic; the current slot tracks have no attendance, handle, or interest and would not be missed.

—John Christiansen

Free Walter Case, Etc.

As a long-time racing fan, I find myself interested in several story lines related to individuals in addition to those that you currently covering.

1. Walter Case Jr.

What is the underling story on this supremely talented man? He paid for his mistake and yet didn't get back to the track. We have several other Ohio-based drivers who were connected with a fixed race at Northfield Park, barred and thrown out of that track and yet were accepted by other tracks while Walter was denied driving privileges. How can this be fair? Where is he, what has happened to him and why wasn't he given opportunities?

2. He's Watching

What happened to this talented horse? He set the world record and then fell off the stage and landed up at stud. What's the story that befell this horse? Why did the trainer talk him up, pronounce him healthy and then the horse run so poorly?

3. Betting Patterns

More and more often I see money moving in and out of pools very late. Early money influences the bettors, then it's taken out of the pool and put on to the ultimate winner. Many times a horse will leave the gate at 4:1, finish and win at 5:2. This type of manipulation, makes the track complicit and is unfair to the bettor. Seeing the odds drop after the first quarter is unacceptable. There are software algorithms that can be utilized to prohibit this problem. Again, in my opinion if the tracks permit this type of manipulation they become part of the problem. Ignorance is not an excuse. I, like many other internet-based bettors thru my betting-service-provider have access to all pools' second-by-second money movement. So you can't fool us as in the early days and we expect better of the tracks. Without this we will find alternative entertainment.

David Perry

Doesn't Trust The Game

The time is here for harness racing to start running commercials during the Super Bowl promoting harness racing.

The criteria the industry must ask itself is before running the ad is...

"Are we confident our product has integrity and can stand up to the public that overwhelmingly believes the trotters are fixed? "

I am shocked the industry can have races with purses

over a million dollars and the elite of harness racing are millionaires 10x over. (Top trainers and drivers.) But yet most of America never even heard of harness racing.

I think the truth is the industry wants to continue to race under the radar and keep harness racing as the dirtiest sport in America.

I was a huge fan of harness racing growing up....but then I grew up and realized the game is rigged and it is not controlled at all. I had enough brains to stop betting the races at a early age and just watch the races for the beauty of the sport.

I believe whipless racing is the way of the future and a Super Bowl ad promoting our whipless sport would pay dividends.

Let the new generation of fans rally behind a sport that is kind to the animals and is sanitized for prime time.

Roll the dice for a year and sock plenty of money away for a Super Bowl ad (to be run in the parts of the country with harness races).

Advertise the whipless Hambo as harness racing's Kentucky Derby.

I know I might be dreaming but do we really think the sport will grow without a national harness racing campaign including a Super Bowl ad.

The regular social media thing is not working. We will not be able to stop all of the juicing but we can eliminate the whip and give the runners a run for their money.

---John Esposito

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Where Did the Different Colors Go?

Thanks for publishing Dean's essay on 1965 and all the heroes of the glory days of the sport. 1965 was my first year at the races, mainly Liberty Bell and beautiful Brandywine--not only my favorite track, but Stanley Dancer's as well. (Watch the [youtube video](#) of the implosion of the Big B--enough to make a fan cry.)

Now, I wish you could get Dean to write an article on how we got to the point where almost all of our horses are a boring dark bay or dark brown. I recently went through many of my old programs from the 60s and early 70s and verified that my mind was not playing tricks w/me: almost every race had at least one or two chestnuts or blacks or greys (some almost white) or roans. Just like it is in the flats today. In his article, Dean mentions that Romeo Hanover was a bright chestnut and Dartmouth was jet black. I wonder if our use of artificial insemination as opposed to live cover allowed a few dark bay or brown studs to basically eliminate other hues from our game. All the best,
Billy Waters

Woodbine Report

2, Wdb, \$34,000, T, PREFERRED. 27.1, 56.3, 1:25, 1:54
1-Fearless Man (b,g,5 - Elegant Man-Lasting Beauty - Yankee Glide) O-Rick Zeron Stables, Noblock Racing Stable, Murray L Greenfield, Cool Cat Racing Inc B-Bobby Brower T/D-Richard Zeron \$17,000 Lifetime Record: 54-18-5-9 \$307,161

To watch the race replay click [here](#)

FEEDBACK...

we want to hear from you!

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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