



Saturday, March 1, 2014

com

Harness Racing Could Have Major TV Presence in 2014

By Bill Finley

An effort spearheaded by Jeff Gural could lead to several hours of exposure on network television for the sport of harness racing in 2014, including a live broadcast of the Little Brown Jug.

Gural and his point man on the project, Sam McKee, are working with CBS Sports Network, which broadcast last



year's Hambletonian and will do so again this year. The network has also reserved time for broadcasts of the Little Brown Jug, the Meadowlands Pace, the Friday night **Breeders Crown races** and the June 28 card at Pocono Downs that includes the Max Hempt, the Earl Beal Jr. Memorial. the Ben Franklin and the James Lynch. Gural said that the

issue going forward will be finding the money to pay for the broadcasts, which he said cost about \$125,000 each. He said that among the races being discussed, the Jug has an excellent chance of being broadcast because a sponsor has been lined up for the race.

"This is a question for the industry, does it want to market the sport or just take the money and let the sport die?" Gural said. "That's the issue. If you're not on TV you are totally irrelevant. The real goal would be to have something every Friday night at, say, 10 o'clock showing major races for ten weeks or so, but there's no way to do it because it's hard to get the air time."

Gural said the Pennsylvania Harness Horsemen's Association may help foot the bill for a broadcast of the Pocono races. When asked where the money would come from to put the Meadowlands Pace and/or the Breeders Crown on television Gural said he was not sure. He said that CBS Sports Network was committed to other programming on the Saturday night of the two-night Breeders Crown event.

"Nothing is confirmed yet other than the Hambletonian," Gural said. "It's all exploratory but they have given us time slots that are available to us. That's one of the hardest parts because they are tied in with so many other sports.

"One of the problems with Meadowlands Pace is the only time slot available is 9 to 10, so the race has to go off at 9:45, which means it would have to be something like the eighth race. I'm not crazy about that. I'd rather it be the 10th

race. Is it a deal breaker? I don't know. Maybe we could start the program earlier that night. That's a possibility."

A lack of television exposure is considered among the reasons harness racing has struggled to stay popular over the years. Over the last many years, the Hambletonian has been the only race on national TV.

"Even though this is expensive I think we have to find a way to make it work," Gural said. "I think it's a no-brainer to do this."

CBS Sports Network is available in 96 million homes nationwide.

Little Brown Jug General Manager and Director of Marketing Phil Terry said CBS Sports Network would be welcomed with open arms.

"We'd be very happy to be back on TV," Terry said. "We were on ESPN for several years and we thought that was quite successful and people certainly liked it. It's been a pleasure to work with Jeff on this."

In thoroughbred racing, The Jockey Club is behind a major series of races on Fox Sports 1 called The Jockey Club Tour. The series begins next Saturday with the Santa Anita Handicap. The series encompasses 11 1/2 hours of coverage.

(continued on next page)



On Golden Ponder

World Champion 2-Year-Old ON GOLDEN PONDER p.2,1:52.2h

World Champion 3 & 4-Year-Old BOLT THE DUER p,3,1:47.4f (\$1,723,645)

\$1,500,000 North America Cup Winner **THINKING OUT LOUD** p,4,1:47.2 (\$1,387,149)

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AT TWO

• 2-FOR-4, 1:52.1S

AT THREE

• 6-FOR-10

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- WON NEW JERSEY CLASSIC IN 1:47.2; WON SIMCOE STAKES IN 1:49.1

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P,2,1:53f, 3, 1:49 (\$2,455,609)

Chester to Open March 28

The racing office at Harrah's Philadelphia announced



yesterday that the 2014 meet will begin March 28, two weeks after the original planned opening day. The track will keep the same closing day, Dec. 14. First post will be 12:40 pm. The meet was supposed to begin

Available

March 14, but had to be delayed.

Track management has said the delay is because of bad weather this winter, but it may also be because of work that may be done on the racetrack, which has come under for from many drivers. Harrah's has brought in experts to look at the track but has not yet said if it will make any changes to it.

The brief statement said the meet would run for the planned 150 days but made no mention of when the dates that have to be canceled will be made up.

Ron Burke-Driving Star?

Move over Yannick Gingras, there ss a new driving star at the Meadowlands.



Ron Burke drove up a storm at the Meadowlands

Trainer Ron Burke drove two winners during qualifying races yesterday morning at the Meadowlands and beat his main man, Gingras, both times. Burke drove Ultimate Beachboy to victory in the sixth qualifying race as Gingras settled for second with The Pan Poobah. He beat Gingras again two races later with Hang Ten, who beat Gingras and Bettor B Lucky by 3 1/4 lengths. Burke failed to win with three other drives but finished in front of Gingras' horse all three times.

The last time Burke won a race of any kind as a driver was Sept. 7,

2013, a qualifying race at the Meadows. He has 108 parimutuel driving wins, the last one coming in 2003.

There were some big names on the morning card yesterday. In a battle of Dan Patch Award winners Somwherovrarainbow beat Anndrovette by 2 3/4 lengths, going in 1:53.3 Top 4-year-old pacer Word Power was also a winner yesterday, as he won by 13 1/2 lengths in 1:52.2

Harness Horse Youth Foundation Launches New Website

Westfield, IN – The Harness Horse Youth Foundation's new website at www.hhyf.org is now live. The redesigned site is easier to navigate with more content and dynamic features. It is highlighted by an easier-to-read layout, including rotating featured stories and photos.

"The website redesign is just one part of HHYF's effort to stay contemporary. We are also excited about our other marketing tools including print materials and brief commercial spot which visually help bring our programs to life. With summer programs right around the corner, it's just the right time for the big 'reveal.""

HHYF has also rolled out a new brochure which can be downloaded from the website. Hard copies can be requested by e-mail to ellen@hhyf.org or keith@hhyf.org.

HHYF Project Manager Keith Gisser explains, "We have always done event specific brochures and flyers. HHYF does so many things for young harness racing fans that we felt it was important to create an identity brochure that introduced them to everything we have to offer."

The Harness Horse Youth Foundation is a charitable 501(c)3 organization dedicated to providing young people and their families educational opportunities with harness horses, in order to foster the next generation of participants and fans. The Foundation has been making a

(continued on next page)

DOMINATE New Jersey's Racing Program with

> (\$2,223,820) CONWAY HALL-MEADOWBRANCH MAGIC

1:51.2F

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Guccio Breeding Available Through Harness Racing Museum

Friday, February 28, 2014 --- from the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame

The Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame is proud to offer a breeding to Guccio as part of our stallion breeding



auction. This is a unique opportunity as his book is sure to be full and closed very shortly.

The world champion and million-dollar winning trotter Guccio 4,1:51.1f (\$1,021,809) begins stud duty at Victory Hill Farm, one of the leading farms in Indiana. He will stand for a fee of \$5,000 for the 2014

Guccio with Jimmy Takter (USTA photo)

breeding season.

Trained by Hall of Famer Jimmy Takter, Guccio is a son of Yankee Glide and the \$181,000 winner Southern Senorita. He showed talent early as a 2-year-old, taking a mark of 1:55.4 as a freshman and winning the Champlain. He became one of the top contenders of his generation as a 3-year-old and missed winning the \$1.5 million Hambletonian by a neck. His 3-year-old record of 1:52.1 was earned via a victory in a Bluegrass division at The Red Mile and then as a 4-year-old in 2013 he trotted to his personal best of 1:51.1f, establishing a world record for 4-year-old trotters.

"Guccio is a very classy and beautiful horse and one of my personal favorites," said Takter. "He is a world champion and a perfect racehorse in every way. It was our plan to race in Europe in 2014 had this opportunity for him to enter the stud not developed. Indiana clearly has one of the most attractive regional programs and we do plan to breed to Guccio as I believe he has every quality to become an outstanding trotting sire."

Income raised by the stallion auction, nearly \$540,000 over the past 15 years, supports the Museum's General Operating Fund. It helps to ensure quality services, special exhibitions, traveling exhibits, promotional support and educational programming for children and adults. Our efforts also help to encourage new owners and fans!

For additional information on the auction, to donate breedings, or to receive a complete list of stallions and conditions for bidding, please contact Joanne Young at 845.294.6330, <u>development@harnessmuseum.com</u> or visit <u>www.harnessmuseum.com</u>, where updates will also be posted.



Some Positives Aren't What They Seem A class II positive.

That's some nasty stuff, eh? It probably involves a betting coup, or a trainer who whips horses in their spare time just for fun. It involves the type of person no one wants to associate with; it's the type of person participants and bettors want out of horse racing forever. It's for the type of person a newspaper writes about to illustrate how awful harness racing trainers are.

I got an email this week from a friend that asked me to "take a look at this". "This" was a ruling involving a lady, a horse and a class II positive. I obliged and I read.....

Leslie Joyce became infatuated with horses at a young age. Now 33, she has been a trainer for 17 years, sporting a lifetime record of 597 starts, a UTRS of 0.196 and

(continued on next page)



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P3, 147.0 M \$2,082,885 P2, 151.3 M \$1.622.636

Top 3 All Time Record Art Official P3, 147.0 M HYPNOTIC BLUECHIP P4, 147.2 M (World Record) **OK** Commander P3. 147.4 M

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earnings of \$192,052. Currently in her barn resides two colts, a broodmare, a horse she is caring for with a broken leg, and a miniature. She's a single mom with a boyfriend who works, who derives her income from horse racing. You know this person, she's everywhere in this sport.



Last year a horse named "I'm the Man" - a five year old trotter by Pinetucky was toiling on the B-tracks. Actually toiling is too weak a word. The horse. with apologies, was terrible. Although he had some back class, in his last five starts in \$5,500 claimers, he was beaten by more than 100 lengths, and in none of those starts

Leslie Joyce

was he even distanced.

One day he was picked up by a man who farmed sheep, who was a hobby horse trainer on the side. He figured he might try and get him going. After a period of time, the sheep farmer - after treating the horse with wormer "once or twice" to get rid of his stomach issues - hooked up I'm the Man. Once was enough. This horse was no damn good. Enter Leslie.

She saw I'm the Man at the sheep farmer's and noticed he was "run down" and "too skinny". She said the conditions at the farm were "wet and dirty", with sheep everywhere. She noticed terrible worms in the horse's manure. But she liked the horse and saw something in him, so she took I'm the Man home, and began to offer up some good old fashioned TLC.

A little while later when she hooked him up, she exclaimed, "Holy crap! What a nice horse."

I'm the Man qualified and was entered into a conditioned claimer at London, in Ontario.

In London, I'm the Man went to the front, made a couple of turns and won. It was probably a happy moment for her. It's what everyone who buys a horse who needs a little work dreams of doing.

The next time the horse was entered, Leslie was informed he would have to be scratched. I'm the Man tested positive for a Class II drug called Levimasole. This was big stuff.

"It was the worst day of my life," she said.

Leslie was suspended for one year with five months stayed, and given a \$2,500 fine. I'm the Man, and any other horse she owned in part were also suspended.

How did this hobby horse cause her so much trouble? You see, the sheep farmer that first took I'm the Man from his previous trainer dewormed the horse "once or twice", but it was with sheep wormer. The trade name (continued on next page)



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Levimasole was deemed to cause the Aminorex positives several years ago in Ontario, Pennsylvania and Ohio, so the Ontario Racing Commission banned its use.

Although Leslie did not use the sheep wormer, nor did she know it was being used, and a reasonable time had passed (23 days) since the last trainer had the horse, she received the positive test for it. She suddenly was one of those trainers the New York Times or PETA talks about.

Is this fair? Probably not.

Leslie (and a horsemen rep, as one might presume she could not afford counsel) appealed, and in the hearing the ORC did reduce the penalty to a 1 month suspension and 11 months stayed, and a \$1,500 fine. I'm not writing this to argue either way if that's too lenient, fair or draconian, on top of what she's gone through. Clearly the ORC has a job to do, and rules to follow. I'll leave it you and others above my pay grade to decide.

Regardless, sometimes nasty positives are not what they seem. My friend tells me that she "is as innocent as anyone ever is likely to be in the harness racing industry and is what this business needs more of." After reading the ORC ruling cover to cover and thinking about her story, you won't catch me arguing with him.

Note: 1. The full ORC ruling - where I took the quotes from - is here.:

http://www.canlii.org/en/on/onrc/doc/2014/2014canlii6713/20 14canlii6713.pdf

I'm the Man is back racing for Leslie. Off his 90-day horse suspension, he made \$11,000 in 19 starts, highlighted by a \$2,500 check, earned in a nice victory in 200.4 at Flamboro Downs.



By Brett Sturman **Race 7**, B-2 Pace

FLEM N EM N takes a key drop and that immediately makes him a serious contender in here. 9-year-old Down-Under horse banked over \$200K last year while taking a 1:49 mark at Pocono and was a decent 3rd when last seen here to the raging Panesthetic. SHOEBEE'S PLACE was the correct smart money play two back for Irvine when he jogged and then last out he managed to close in :26 flat despite being used through a :26:3 opening quarter; 7-year-old has loads of back class too. COBALT MAN is another that finally gets to take a drop but he catches a couple imposing foes; recent form is tough to figure. TREND SPOTTER wired lesser in his most recent; TARPON HANOVER seems up against it but he hasn't been bad in his last pair.

Race 8, C-1 Pace

ARSENAL makes his fourth start back and is finally able to drop away from the "B" level after facing the likes of Abelard Hanover and other superior foes. Zeron was listed but opts to Alagna's HUMILITY, so we get Tetrick here instead. SIMPLY BUSINESS shined last out against lesser in his first start for Mark Silva; former freshman champion appears to be on the upswing. SUMMER SMACKDOWN lands morning line favoritism for top connections but makes his first start since November; tough call. RUSSLEY RASCAL N has been closing well at Yonkers; small track horse doesn't seem all that outclassed even with Vallee. ROCKNROLL JEWEL is likely to offer a short price from the rail and this field looks a notch tougher than what he's been in against.

Race 9, B-2 Pace

UP UP AND OUT doesn't catch the toughest B-2 field ever, and this one already showed two back that he's capable of speed to overcome the outside. Surick trainee exits a first over mile against stiffer competition; either of his last couple tries would be more than good enough. ROCKIN WIZARD was poor the last time he was seen here in early January but seems to have improved since then for Virgil Morgan. TWINCREEKS JESSE was Dave



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P,2,1:53f, 3, 1:49 (\$2,455,609) Falcon Seelster-Lilting Laughter-Nihilator

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Inquiries to Farm Manager Brad Wallace 14346 Township Road 205, Findlay, Ohio 45840 (419) 422-3004, Fax (419) 425-2999 www.hickorylanefarm.com Miller's pick over almost half of the field and makes his third start back on the year. P L FIGHTER drops to the level of his most recent win but those last two races weren't good; VILLAGE BEAT offers a longshot chance for a barn that's been producing good results. MORTAL ZIN can beat me if he can.

Race 10, C-2 Pace

BOBJACKS ANGLE A never seems to be in the right position but he's come charging home willingly in his last pair for Smith and Garland. I believe he might be winless lifetime at this track dating back through last year and this will be his best chance to break through as one of the favorites. It's hard to believe that HRUBYS N LUCK paced a 1:48 mile just less than two years ago with Cad Gregory; closed in :27:3 last out. Bongiorno ends up on MAJOR JETTE over the Irvine trained IN KENNY'S HONOR which is worth noting; URGENTLY was YG's pick. MASTER STROKE went an number of big miles here many moons ago for Pena; now goes first start for Dawn Anderson.

\$24 ticket (\$1 base): 6-8 / 3-8 / 3-7-10 / 5-6 \$64 ticket (\$1 base): 6-8 / 3-4-8-10 / 3-6-7-10 / 5-6

SPOTLIGHT'S FEATURE RACE

Track	Race	Purse	
Woodbine	2 nd , Preferred	\$34,000	pps
Meadowlands	11 th , Gilmour Memorial	\$20,000	pps
Yonkers	6 th , Open	\$33,000	<u>pps</u>



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Yonkers Report

6, YR, \$33,000, P, F&M OPEN HANDICAP POST POSITIONS 1-4 DRAWN POST POSITIONS 5-7 DRAWN POST POSITION 8 ASSIGNED, 27.4, 56.3, 1:24.3, 1:53.1, FT 1-Cocoa Beach (m, 6, Mach Three--Lils Surfergirl, by Jenna's Beach Boy) O-Brittany M Robertson. B-Brian E & Dr David G Legge, CA & Robert A Stewart, CA. T-Brittany Robertson. D-Matt Kakaley, \$16,500, Lifetime Record: 78-23-12-10, \$231,115

2-Yagonnakissmeornot (m, 5, The Panderosa -Artstopper, by Artsplace), \$23,000 2010 SHS-HBG O-Allard Racing Inc, CA & Yves Sarrazin, CA & Kapildeo Singh. B-Roll The Dice Stable. T-Rene Allard. D-Daniel Dube, \$8,250

3-Sir Jillian Z Tam (m, 6, Bettor's Delight--In For Life, by Life Sign), \$40,000 2009 LEX-SEL O-Patrick D Lachance & Z Tam Stables LLC & Ira Rosenblum. B-White Birch Farm. T-Pat Lachance. D-Pat Lachance, \$3,960 Calls: 1Q, 1H, 3Q, 5H, 3Q - Finish Order: Carols Desire, Economy Terror, Fashion Mystery, Swinging Beauty, Royal Cee Cee N To view the replay click here

8, YR, \$33,000, T, OPEN HANDICAP POST POSITIONS 1-4 DRAWN POST POSITIONS 5-8 ASSIGNED, 28.1, 57.3, 1:26.3, 1:55.3, FT

1-Tober (g, 6, Credit Winner--La Tapatia, by Cumin) O-Kristie Leigh Farm Inc & Joseph V Betro. B-Bernard J White & Kristie Leigh Farm Inc. T-Edward Hart. D-Jason Bartlett, \$16,500, Lifetime Record: 76-18-19-9, \$417,427 **2-Super Manning** (g, 6, Diamond Goal--Judy's Gold Digger, by Muscles Yankee) O-Joseph Pennacchio. B-Joseph Pennacchio. T-Kevin Carr. D-Matt Kakaley, \$8,250

3-Traverse Seelster (g, 6, Angus Hall--Travelin Lavec, by Mr Lavec), \$40,000 2009 FOREST O-Keith J Pippi. B-Seelster Farms Inc, CA. T-Josh Green. D-Ron Pierce, \$3,960

Calls: 1, 1Q, 1Q, 1H, NK - Finish Order: Tall Cotton, Live Jazz, Bastille, Fearless Man, Likeabatoutahell To view the 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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