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**Sunday, May 24, 2020**

# Hallelujah, racing's back!

*All eyes were on Scioto Downs as harness racing finally returned Friday and Saturday. Driver Chris Page and trainer Ron Burke dominated opening weekend in which \$2,174,569, total, was wagering on the two cards – \$1,054,294 on Friday and \$1,120,275 on Saturday.*

by Jay Wolf

## Ohio

In the spring of 1959, Charlie Hill opened Scioto Downs to replace the undersized Hilliard Raceway. Shortly after the opening the south Columbus track was tabbed as "Ohio's Showplace of Racing."

More than 60 years later, all the eyes in the harness racing world were back on Scioto Downs as it was the only harness track racing in North America, playing host to the first



Brad Conrad

**Jason Brewer wearing a face mask on Friday at Scioto Downs, the first harness track in North America to return after a two-month COVID-19 shutdown.**

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Brad Conrad

**The return of harness racing was positively heavenly Friday at Scioto Downs, the first North American standardbred track to re-open after the COVID-19 shutdown.**

harness action since the COVID-19 pandemic forced CalExpo to close on March 31. The fans wagered \$1,054,294 on the 12-race Friday night card. \$1,120,275 was wagered on Saturday's 12 races for a two-day handle of \$2,174,569.

Friday night, the long wait was over with an action packed \$9,000 claiming optional event for filly and mare pacers in the first race.

Six-year-old Duck Duck Dragon (Chris Page) over-came post seven and edged Foolish Heart (Brett Miller) by a length in 1:52.

The Dragon Again mare won for the third time in nine 2020 starts for the Burke Racing Stable and Weaver Brussemi.

Page and trainer Ron Burke dominated the opening night of the Scioto Downs meet, winning six and four races, respectively. The pair added another win on Saturday evening.

Page finished the first two nights with eight wins in 21 starts.

"I can't take all of the credit," said Page. "With Ronnie Burke, I have a great support system with those guys. The grooms are working their tails off to make sure their horses are tight and ready to go. It's kind of like the (Burke Stable) hasn't missed a beat."

The \$18,000 filly and mare open pace was won by Rosemary Rose (Page) over the fast closing Sally Fletcher A (Brett Miller) in 1:51.2.

When the field of six was sent on their way, St Lads Gidget (Aaron Merriman) protected his rail position and set the fractions of :26.4, :55.2 and 1:23.1. Golden Paradise (Trace Tetrick) made a first over move, providing the necessary



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Brad Conrad

**Duck Duck Dragon (Chris Page) won the first race at Scioto Downs on Friday's card.**

cover for the eventual winner.

Page tipped Rosemary Rose off the cover and looked to be clear, but had to survive the late rally of Sally Fletcher A, who came from last and was a scant nose short.

Rosemary Rose scored for the 31st time in her career. The 6-year-old Foreclosure N mare is campaigned by Burke Racing Stable, Jason Melillo and Weaver Brussemi.

Friday night's co-feature was the \$18,000 open trot that featured a dead-heat between Peggy Sue (Brady Galliers) and Eye Ofa Tiger As (Elliott Deaton) in 1:55.1.

The winners benefited from breaks by a pair of Burke trainees, Dylan The Great and the heavy favorite Workingonbroadway.

"Oh my gosh, how do you kill two birds with one stone?" asked Page. "(Ronnie) had two horses (break). It was one of those freak things that happen.

"(Workingonbroadway) got a little hot on me. Tonight he was really fired up. I should have kept him quiet a little more. It was user error."

Peggy Sue is a 5-year-old Donato Hanover mare campaigned by the Galliers Racing Stable. Eye Ofa Tiger As, a Chapter Seven gelding, is owned by Aci Stuteri Ab and Kjell Johansson.

On Saturday evening, My Hero Ron (Aaron Merriman) won the \$18,000 open pace going gate-to-wire in 1:50.

Gd Western Joe (Chris Page) and Geraldo (Kayne Kaufman) completed the trifecta.

The 8-year-old gelded son of Well Said is owned by Brian Wilt and conditioned by Danny Dubeansky. With the win, My Hero Ron is just \$337 short of the magical million-dollar mark with career earnings of \$999,667.

Despite being shut out on the opening night card, driver



Jay Wolf

**Chris Page won eight races on Friday and Saturday night.**

Brett Miller and trainer Virgil Morgan, Jr. teamed up with a pair of wins on Saturday.

Morgan has dominated the Scioto Downs training standings, looking for his 27th straight training title.

Page is optimistic for a great 2020 season personally and at the Columbus oval.

"I am very fortunate. I have some very nice 3-year-old Ohio breds – Elver Hanover, Looksgoodinaromper and It's Academic.

"The track was almost perfect. They had the Coon Brothers (Greg and Dan Coon) come in and work on it. It was fast tonight and I predict that the open horses will go in sub (1):50 each week."

The two nights of racing capped off a wild week in Ohio.

On Thursday, May 14, Governor Mike DeWine and the Ohio State Racing Commission (OSRC) gave the horsepeople permission to race with strict health guidelines and no spectators.

The OSRC required all horses to qualify prior to racing. As a result, marathon qualifying sessions were held at Scioto Downs, Northfield Park, the Delaware County Fairgrounds and the Warren County Fairgrounds in the past nine days. More than 1,200 horses raced in those qualifying events.

Live racing action returns to Scioto Downs on Memorial Day (May 25) with a 14 race card. A \$20,000 guaranteed Pick 5 pool will be available. Free past performance pages for the full card are available at [www.SciotoDowns.com](http://www.SciotoDowns.com).

First post is 6:30 p.m.

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## What you should consider when handicapping after racing's COVID-19 hiatus

*Four important tips to making your return to betting harness racing a successful one.*

*by Jerry Connors*

As the pari-mutuel tracks gradually start to reopen after their COVID-19 hiatus, bettors with bankrolls growing itchier by the day are starting, or getting ready to start, to swing into action.

As if it isn't hard enough to try to get a profit through the windows in normal circumstances, our present handicappers face the challenge of evaluating horses who haven't competed in purse races for months at a time, or have only one purse line since returning, or so forth, as opposed to the "old norm" of most horses having established form through a basic racing schedule. Obviously, some additional compensation for this factor will be needed.

Here are some of the basic adjustments to the evaluative process of a field that we think will help punters in the first couple of weeks back of steady pari-mutuel action:

**1. Pay attention to those qualifying races.** We continue to think that the qualifiers, without requiring a horse to do much other than meet the local standard of time while staying errorless, are the best sign possible into a horse's current form after an absence.

The public, of course, will be looking for horses who were successful in their qualifying attempts, and they will also hold in high regard horses who set the pace and didn't miss by too much. About the first group, we would prefer that those horses come from stables who have shown winning trends in other qualifying events (such as the Burke Brigade in Ohio is exhibiting), and be careful that other winners aren't being over-bet, especially if the trip wasn't especially taxing.

About the second group, we would have more caution, since the horses' races figure to go faster than their qualifiers – if they couldn't hold up in an easier situation, the conditioning they gained may not be offset by the tougher job they are given to do. One exception: if the horse set the pace or moved to the lead, and then was caught by a horse who is much more "classy," especially in a fast back pace, the loss of ground can be forgiven. If a good horse (especially an "unknown") from a hot barn/stable is the only thing which prevented a horse from winning, that horse can come under serious consideration.

*The type of horse we prefer coming off qualifiers are those who finish strongly*, even if it took them awhile to get into the race. The "fast last quarter in qualifier" angle is one of the soundest ones we have run across, as it shows a horse who can produce at "crunch time" and may still have more improvement left in him. Unless he is overbet, you can get surprising mileage out of this type of horse.

**2. Try to discover early "trends" as quickly as possible – before the crowd catches on.** Trying to figure out which are the likeliest early paths to victory is a big advantage, with perhaps the most notable trend being the winning stable (such as the Burke horses mentioned above). Also, watch the first couple of races on a given day to see if speed is holding up well, or whether come-from-behind horses have the edge. The former can be uncatchable during the prime of a warm season, but don't toss out that stretch hard-charger if several similarly-styled horses have already done well on that day.

If your program carries the driver and trainer statistics for the present year next to the individual's name in the past performances, be sure to make frequent excursions to the front of the program after the first couple days of the meet, as there is where you often will find the stats for the current meeting. A horseman who built up impressive numbers at a smaller track or while racing months ago isn't necessarily the one you want behind your pick or picks as racing is in reemergence.

When I was at Northfield in the 1980s, on July 1 there was one trainer/driver who showed 200 starts and 46 victories. If someone just coming to Northfield for wagering opportunity saw those stats, they might give extra points to the horseman showing a 23 per cent win rate. They, however, wouldn't have known that the horseman, after 100 starts, had 42 victories already – and thus really won only four races in his next 100 starts. A recent (while representative) patch of past performances are the most likely keys to cashing tickets – don't be fooled by stale data.

**3. Horses (especially) and horsemen with a longtime history of local success can sometimes be susceptible bets.** "Name performers" at a local oval will often attract betting attention based on reputation. But, if these individuals, horse or human, are drawing dollars not on recent established form, but on those reputations, they are likely to be underlays, and your attention may be better shifted to someone who approaches today with demonstrable recent encouraging signs – their "non-reputations" up until recently could grow quickly, and you want to be there first, while the public is still mired in previous achievements not relevant to the fact that we are racing *today*.



Along those lines – if a horse has had an excellent start or two back for a purse, and is today faced with a first-time returnee with back class, the recent achiever certainly will get the edge in price, as the sharpie will be stepping up in class and thus may be a bit longer on the board than he should be. If you're getting attractive odds – or if the Exacta *either way* is an overlay – you have a possible opportunity for profit. (Check those monitors for Double and Exacta overlays!)

#### 4. Practice on any tracks opening ahead of your circuit.

Re-familiarize yourself with the basics of understanding the races; try to recalibrate some sense of proportion among the classes, especially with the horses dropping down in class; watch and learn to identify trends. Golfers usually go out and hit a couple of buckets of balls before they begin a particular golfing season; this would be the harness equivalent. Keep your expectations – and your investment – within a comfortable range.

Many of you reading may be thinking that you knew a good bit of this already. But we'll finish out with a point most people have never considered about "tightness" coming back to the betting scene:

How did I do off a "layoff" last year, or in recent times?

My basic handicapping job is to produce a tip sheet, "PHILLY'S FINEST," for the Harrah's Philadelphia meet. I evaluate the fields, make a semi-intelligent guess what the off-time odds will approximate, and try to give the readers the horse(s) I think will be "best value," the one most likely to yield a profit in the long run. Some races you just have to accept that a favorite is unbeatable; other times, you try to take a shot against a vulnerable chalk with a horse who may have more in the tank than the crowd may guess.

Evidently I didn't listen to that last sentence when the 2019 racing season at Philly started, because these were my statistics for the first 21 cards of the racing season:

FIRST 21 CARDS (278 RACES)		
HARRAH'S PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 29 - MAY 8, 2019		
TOP SELECTIONS OF "PHILLY'S FINEST" TIP SHEET		
top selection	win rate	+/- % / per \$2 win bet
below 1-1 (even money)	62%	-23%
1-1 up to 7-2	39%	+9%
7-2 up to 9-2	11%	-19%
5-1 and up (47 races)	0%	-100%
5 cards in 21 where a \$2 win bet on the top horse in each race showed a profit on the day		
TOTAL NET FOR \$2 TO WIN, 278 RACES		-\$137.20 (-25%)
Net \$2 win bet on favorites, 278 races		-\$46.00 (-8%)

My attempts to beat the favorite with trotters and pacers at some odds early on in the 2019 Philly season were obviously

abysmal, including NO winners out of 47 selections going off at 5-1 or more. I did have a small profit range with horses who weren't really heavy favorites or who were well-regarded non-favorites, but my picks weren't so great in the other categories, and I had a very bad ROI (return on investment) of -25 per cent to start the meet.

So I go back, look at these statistics, resolve not to be so speculative with longshots against favorites in starting back up, and I should do better, right?

Well, I didn't make any adjustment (at least not consciously) during 2019, and this second chart tells the story of a turnaround in fortunate finishes:

cards 22-33 at Philly	10 of 12 profitable days +\$85.60 (+49%)
cards 22-150 at Philly	-\$11.90 (-0.3%)
TOTAL 2019 NET FOR \$2 TO WIN, 2033 RACES	-\$148.90 (-3.7%)
Net \$2 win bet on favorites, 2033 races	-\$338.90 (-8.3%)

What conclusions do draw from these numbers? Was I desperately unlucky at the beginning of the 2019 meeting, and should I stay with the mindset that allowed me to do fairly well the rest of the year?

I think not, though I won't make a major change – the numbers seem to indicate that I do better once form has been established and a circuit is under full steam; in addition, those numbers were pretty good for a player who did not have the benefit of raceday scratches, raceday driver changes, raceday biases, and raceday actual odds. But the inability to get early good-priced winners will probably incline me "as the starting gate pulls away" to really study the times when the choice comes down to a favorite vs. a mild longshot, and probably I won't be as swashbuckling as I was early in 2019. I won't take bad value, but maybe the mid-contenders won't appear so rosy through the glasses of analyzed numbers from last year.

YMWV (your mileage WILL vary). We all have our different styles, our different preferences, our different paths to the winner's circle and the cashier windows, and a player MUST find the methodology that fits her or him best and allows the experience to be a rewarding one intellectually, and occasionally (or even more) a rewarding one financially.

I am reading a book about football/soccer called "Everything You Know About Football Is Wrong." It is a call to apply modern analytic techniques to a game where a manager's opinion, with all its biases, should be de-emphasized, and actual data, minutely recorded during the actual games, should be the guiding force for a team. The

book says that the player who can score the second goal in a given match for his team can be more valuable than the player who leads the team in goals, and it mathematically shows you can get more points in the standings if your team posts a shutout than if they score anything fewer than three goals – it says that defense and defensive players are underrated.

The point from the book I'd like to leave here at the end of this piece is that there is NO ONE WAY TO SUCCESS. Depending on your bankroll, your skills, and your strengths and weaknesses, there are many paths a football/soccer team

can travel to become successful, in absolute or relative terms. And it's the same in harness racing – you have to establish in your own minds what principles and values help you best. We hope to have laid out a couple of factors that may deserve extra emphasis early in the handicapping season. The fun of the game is to now take this information, apply it – and enjoy yourself.

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## Pennsylvania



### Misery for Pennsylvania stables continues as harness racing resumes elsewhere

*by Evan Pattak for The Meadows Standardbred Owners Association*

Before the COVID-19 pandemic shut down harness racing March 16 at The Meadows Racetrack & Casino, veteran trainer Randy Bendis had 25 horses in his stable. That's down to 23, as Bendis was forced to sell two mares to raise cash to pay his bills and avoid laying off staff.

Now, that number may decline even further as racing venues in states other than Pennsylvania are reopening, forcing Bendis and his owners to consider moving their horses outside the Commonwealth for a chance to earn money. Not only would that reduce income for Pennsylvania horsepeople and their supply chains, but a diminished horse population also could make it harder for The Meadows and other Keystone State tracks to assemble full, quality fields when racing does resume.

All harness racing in North America shut down in mid-to-late March and has been dark since. But because trainers, grooms, security personnel and track and facilities maintenance staff still report to work each day to feed and exercise horses, the vast majority of people needed to stage live racing already are on the backside and following stringent CDC safety measures. Live racing would require only a few more people, including state judges and a

broadcast production crew, action that would have negligible impact on public health.

States have begun to realize this and have announced reopening schedules for their racetracks. Ohio venues have returned to racing, while the states of New York, Delaware, Indiana and Minnesota, as well as Ontario, have announced June reopening dates. (All venues will race without spectators.) If Pennsylvania doesn't take a similar step soon, Bendis said he'll be forced to ship some of his horses to jurisdictions where they can earn purses to offset ongoing expenses.

"If we don't get any news here, two of my horses will go to Hoosier Park (Indiana), four to Ohio and two more to Yonkers (New York)," said Bendis, who owns a piece of most of the horses in his stable. "My partners have suggested sending their horses to trainers at jurisdictions that are racing, and I really can't argue with them."

Bendis indicates he knows of horsemen who have taken part-time work delivering groceries and driving for Uber to keep some cash coming in. Things haven't reached that point yet for trainer Sarah Andrews, but she can see a time when they might.

At the start of this week, Andrews' stable at The Meadows had nine horses. That has changed.

"I sent one to Indiana on Monday," she said. "My owner has horses in four different states, so there's no reason not to move them to states where they can race. I can't hold my owners hostage."

What really hurts: the Indiana-bound horse is Statham N, a fast-class pacer almost certain to turn a healthy profit this year. If Pennsylvania racing doesn't reopen soon, Andrews and her staff may not see any of it.

"I'm hoping my owners will send their horses right back here once we start racing," she said. "If they don't, my stable will slowly disappear."



## EUROPEAN REPORT



with **THOMAS HEDLUND**

### Racing Mange, Propulsion to Elitloppet

by *Thomas Hedlund*

Joakim Lövgren won the 2011 Elitloppet with his German-bred star trotter Brioni. This year, Lövgren has another chance to claim the victory in one of the most prestigious harness races in the world since his Racing Mange (Orlando Vici) was best in Gävle's Gold race with \$31,000 to the winner.

Racing Mange left quickly from post four and hit the lead in the first turn, while Conrads Rödluva – who made her debut among elite horses – followed behind the leader.

Since a ticket to the Elitloppet was at stake, first choice

Billie de Montfort made a great effort from second over, but the serious battle for the victory was about leader Racing Mange and Conrads Rödluva, who got space to speed in the end of the last turn.

Joakim Lövgren's 7-year-old colt fought strongly and came home in the fastest mile in Sweden this year: 1:52.1 and the son of Orlando Vici is now set for next week's Elitloppet at Solvalla.

Solvalla presented one more contender for the Elitloppet on Saturday night. Propulsion, with four previous attempts in the Elitloppet, will try his luck once again. The Muscle Hill son hasn't seen a racetrack since Prix d'Amérique at Vincennes in January this year.

Three invitations remain before the field of 16 horses is set for Elitloppet and we can guess that Milliondollarrhyme, Disco Volante and Billie de Montfort are favorites to grab the last spots. Billie de Montfort's performance in Gävle was strong and she was third, beaten by a half-length by winner Racing Mange.

Door knockers are: Heart Of Steel, Cyber Lane, Milligan's School and Mindyourvalue W.F.

[Racing Mange replay.](#)

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## Start-up maven's harness racing platform fueled by sour taste, entrepreneurial talents

*EquineX CEO Derek Ivany believes his platform could dramatically increase industry integrity and transparency if widely adopted.*

**by Dave Briggs**

When Derek Ivany first started hanging around the backstretch at the Woodbine tracks, it didn't take him long to realize horse racing had some major challenges and impediments to sustainability and growth. What he saw soured him on the business at the time — "I heard lots of bad stories of fraud and deceit," he said — but now the 37-year-old Toronto resident is using that experience, along with his entrepreneurial and tech start-up skills, to try to change harness racing for the better as CEO and founder of digital platform EquineX ([www.equinex.com](http://www.equinex.com)).

The app-based system aims to use transparency to increase accountability and integrity in the sport by creating secure, detailed records for every horse placed on the platform.

Ivany has had considerable success at a number of start-ups, including EuroLife Brands and, most recently, as CEO of cannabis company AgraFlora, which he helped grow from less than \$2 million in market capitalization to a high of nearly \$300 million before he exited when the company had a \$250 million market cap.

First exposed to harness racing as a young man by a boss that had a small ownership stake in some horses, Ivany's interest in harness racing was piqued enough to get his groom card so he could be in the backstretch.

"I tried to get involved a little bit more, but my boss was, at the time, getting screwed over, for lack of a better word, and that left a bad taste in my mouth. He never really made any money with it, it was just a non-stop flow of invoices coming in. I guess I lost my passion for it for many years and then, later on in life, I got connected with (standardbred owner) Paul (Simmonds) through a mutual contact," Ivany said.

Simmonds, the chairman of EquineX, explained in a previous HRU story ([full story here](#)) that the platform makes the horse the center of the universe where secure records

leave a full account of everything the horse has done and had done to it in terms of training and veterinary procedures. Simmonds equated the service to Carfax which changed the used car business by providing a full accounting of a car's life cycle to provide transparency to potential buyers.

Ivany was initially trying to establish an Equine Exchange — hence why it's called EquineX — "a stock market for horses, where people can buy and sell fractional ownership as if it was a different asset class." But when he looked into the industry further he realized the sport was missing the equivalency of information needed for an Initial Public Offering (IPO).

"Having a background in capital markets and stocks and underwriting... I essentially took a deep look into everything and realized that really there's no real paperwork or clear standard to start from to be able to put together an underwriting that's a system," he said.

"For horse racing, it's not there. From a disclosure perspective, you can't really do that because people aren't transparent and you don't know that that horse gets 50 shots injected into its knee or an x-ray that shows that maybe there's a spiral fracture and that x-ray doesn't exist today because obviously the seller wouldn't want to tell you that. So, from a transparency perspective, I was, in my mind, saying, 'We've got to put this in a tamper-proof record.'"

Hence, the first step was to try to get the industry to adopt EquineX as a standard for horse transparency.

"We decided to put the fractional ownership marketplace on the sidelines and work on building the basics and that's what essentially started the whole EquineX integrity and transparency aspect, building the tool set that will allow the creation of these records and really, starting with 2-year-olds and even weanlings if we work with breeders, to get this adopted," Ivany said. "So the records are being created, the vet records are there, the training records, the vaccinations, everything is in one spot, it's consistent and, over time, if the standard develops, it's an even playing field for everybody."

The cost of subscribing is \$29.99 (U.S.) per horse, per month, and with that, trainers use the EquineX app to both track everything with each horse — workouts, equipment, vet procedures and more — and use it as a tool to share whatever information they want with the horse's owners.

"They can simply use this as a communication tool where they could track a workout or input private notes that they want to send, then — boom — it can go to the owner or all the owners, if it's a syndicate, or whoever you want to receive that information. It doesn't go anywhere else. It really saves trainers from having to be on the phone all day," Ivany said.



All horses registered before May 31 that continue subscribing for 30 months are eligible to a new stakes series exclusively for 4-year-olds that will be added to the calendar beginning in 2022 at Lexington's Red Mile. No further staking fees will be required. Twenty per cent of the subscription fees will be donated to a Coronavirus Hardship Fund for the industry.

Though the app is simple to use for anyone that's ever used a smartphone, Ivany said one of the biggest challenges to people adopting EquineX is the fact the industry is resistant to change.

"There are a lot of people that are old fashioned in how they do things," he said.

"Part of our training app, for instance, has digital equipment cards. You can instantly pull up equipment cards on the horse and you might just want to flip that (information) over to someone else that needs to know that if a horse is going into a race. Instead of taking a picture of a piece of paper that has a coffee stain on it, you can just go and send it instantly.

"There's training records, historical records and seeing how this horse performed and then correlating that with shoeing changes, equipment changes, nutrients et cetera. All of this is way too complex to track on paper and in your mind. You might not know things are happening because you're not going to remember what you did three weeks ago. Most people don't remember what they ate three days ago," Ivany said.

"It's important to also mention that they only track what they want to track. They are able to customize their stable the way they want it and what they want on there goes on there. If they don't want something on there, it doesn't go on there. Nobody else sees their data, it's only theirs. There's nothing they have to be worried about. There's no angle where somebody is trying to go and scoop up their stable or something like that. I'm not even sure the potential scenarios that might exist."

Ivany currently owns a 4-year-old trotting mare named Weslynn Quest trained by Chris Beaver. Ivany said Beaver is currently using the app.

"He loves it, he thinks it's great," Ivany said of Beaver. "We're doing all kinds of things where we are tweaking adjustments and tracking different types of training styles, whether it be fast, slow, interval training and things like that. We're

constantly improving some of the backend metrics that the user doesn't see, but also some of the front-end metrics."

Ivany also believes improving the sport's technology will also help grow it with younger people that are noticeably absent among the ownership ranks.

"Since everybody is connected to their phones, if you can connect this business to a tablet or whatever, that's your last hope to get a new generation into this. Otherwise, it will probably just be the kids of people that are already in the business that, may or may not have interest, that will be the future of the industry. It will continue to diminish over time until there won't be an industry. That's just my personal opinion and I don't want that to happen, but people thought that Blockbuster was a great, great business model and it just took one thing to disrupt that and make it go away forever," Ivany said.

"The smart people in technology are going to be the ones that keep control of this business."

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## HARNES RACING UPDATE

### About Harness Racing Update

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## A conversation with owner Bill Donovan

by Murray Brown

*Tell me about yourself, Bill Donovan (AKA Harvey Schwartz), I asked my friend on a recent call.*

"Well, I was born on Cape Cod and spent a good part of my youth growing up in the Boston area. My dad was in the moving business. Our family developed the largest Mayflower Agency in North America. When my dad passed, my mom was left to take charge of the business. She recruited me to help her run it. I worked at that, together with assorted other businesses, some of them ancillary to the moving trade, for the next 39 years. After a bout with cancer and I suppose a slight case of burn out, I decided to sell the business and got out. Throughout those years, I had developed a love of horses, particularly harness horses.

"When I was quite young, a neighbor across the street from us had some horses and would be kind enough to take me to Foxboro when he went. It was pretty much love at first sight. I thought that it would be fun to work with these wonderful God-given creatures. I got a job with Walter Ross at the same time that he had Yankee Bambino. It was probably my first introduction to really hard work. But I loved it. Working hard has been among the greatest pleasures of my life. I've never really looked upon it negatively. I've always set goals in my life. When I've been fortunate enough to reach them, the satisfaction achieved has been more than worth the struggle to get there.

"I bought my first horse in 1979 and my first trainer was Lee Alphen who now heads the Christian Harness Horseman's Association. Together with four friends we bought two horses for less than \$2,000 and I was on my way."



Dave Briggs

**Owner Bill Donovan.**

### How many horses do you have now?

"I own parts, or all of 47 horses presently in training. The majority of them are with Ronnie Burke, but I have some with Richard Moreau in Ontario; my long-time friend George Ducharme, who in my opinion is an exceptional horseman who sometimes flies under the radar, perhaps because of his unassuming personality, and Brian Brown who trains some Ohio-breds that I own in partnership with my good friend Joe Sbrocco. I also own a Maine Sires Stakes Champion in partnership with Paul Kelley's dad, Jack.

"I also own 19 broodmares 10 sucklings and six yearlings either by myself or in partnership, despite promising myself that I was getting out of the breeding business."

### Speaking of the breeding business, please tell us about your adventures in it?

"I learned two main lessons: 1. I have been a much more successful yearling buyer than I was as a breeder. 2. Of all the places to be a breeder, New York might be the toughest. It makes no sense to me that the state requires a mare to be



on site when she is being inseminated. I understand the counter argument that it helps agriculture by having more horses resident in the state. However, I believe the negatives to be far greater than that one positive. It raises the costs for an out of state mare owner astronomically. It creates a situation where some breeders won't ship anything but maiden or barren mares to be bred in the state, thus robbing the state's stallions of many top mares. In many, if not most of those situations, the out of state breeder will decide not to breed to a New York stallion at all. Why do so when he or she can just get semen shipped from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Ontario or Indiana and in so doing lower the costs and risk to a new born foal involved?

"I bought a farm (Stirling Brook) in New York, not too far from Saratoga, built up what I felt was a pretty fair bunch of broodmares, but for whatever reasons I wasn't very successful as a breeder. I sold a package of the better mares to Hanover Shoe Farms and eventually sold the farm vowing not to get back in the breeding business.

"I guess, though, that I am now back in, but with one big change: I'm boarding my mares and raising my foals with people who do that for a living. In the long run, I think I'm probably saving money and certainly ridding myself of headaches."

#### **Let's talk about Maven.**

"She is undoubtedly the best horse I've ever owned. I always thought of her as being extra special, even before she showed her extreme talent on the racetrack. I could have named her "Sybil", she had so many personalities. Early on, one had no idea which one would show up. Like some other exceptional mares early on, she had her good days and her bad ones. She had more of the bad ones in her youth. As she grew older, she became more consistently good. I remember a conversation I had with the late Frank Baldassare. I told Frank that before her 3-year-old season was over, I felt that Maven would be just as good, if not better than Check Me Out. He thought I was joking. But I wasn't. She was focused, determined and had a tremendous desire to win."

#### **You sold her for \$750,000 at the 2014 Standardbred Horse Sales Company's mixed sale. Why did you sell her?**

"I thought her best racing days were behind her and at the time I was done with the breeding business. I believed that whoever bought her would primarily be looking at her as a future broodmare. I was pleasantly surprised that she

brought as much as she did and maybe even more surprised that Jimmy Takter bought her with the expectation that she would be able to continue racing at the highest level."

#### **Who have been the five best racehorses that you have owned?**

'In order: 1. **"Yet To Come"**. We are never totally satisfied That's what keeps most of us going to the yearling sales each fall. 2. **Maven**. See above. 3. **Youaremycandygirl**. She had such a great heart. She'd give her all every time she set her foot on the racetrack. Throughout her career, she had terrible issues in tying up. It's my belief that is the only thing that prevented her from becoming one of the greatest mares ever. 4. **Bannockburn**. A foal of 1995, this son of Copter Lobell was one of the first horses I ever bred and raised. He was the first to end the season as a national season's champion. 5. **Jolene Jolene**. She had the misfortune to have been born in the same year as Mission Brief. She equaled Mission Brief's record at two. Unfortunately, she suffered a career ending injury at three. As a broodmare for Hunterton Farms, they have sold her first two yearlings for \$200,000 and \$600,000. I'm a part owner of her first foal Crucial."

#### **What do you like most about our business?**

"Primarily the many challenges involved in the yearling game. The first thing, of course, is the pedigrees. Sure, you can occasionally hit upon the freak horse like California Chrome, who was by "who" and out of "what", but, generally speaking, our best horses are genetically disposed to becoming great. There is usually something in their pedigree that you can hang your hat on. Does that mean that every well-bred horse is destined to become good? Absolutely not. Therein lies the challenge. But that is the starting point for me. From there you go to watching them move in person or seeing their videos. Obviously the former is better. Then conformation. It's near impossible to find the faultless horse. The trick is determining what you can live with and what you can't. The next would be value. You try to price a yearling that you like and try to stay within certain financial parameters.

Secondarily, is the social aspect of the sport. Our business is loaded with so many great people. Interacting with them is great. Making new friends may even be better. Dreaming the dream before they get to the races may be the best. Socially, the sport is not what it once was. I'm guessing the primary reason for this is that so many fewer people go to

the races. It's easier to stay at home and watch. Dinners at Lexington and Harrisburg can still be a blast, though."

### **Who is the wisest person you've known in the sport?**

"There are two of them. They were both named Bill. I knew Bill Weaver. I never had the pleasure of meeting Bill Shehan. With a relatively small number of mares they have had as potent an effect on our breed as anybody. To a large extent, that includes all of the major market breeders."

### **You've been in the restaurant business. Please tell me about it?**

"At one time I owned three restaurant in Saratoga Springs. Now, thankfully, I only own part of one. It's tougher and less gratifying than the horse business."

### **What's your favorite restaurant ever?**

"There's a Franco/Italian restaurant in London England called Clos Maggiore that checks all the boxes."

### **It's well known that you love to travel. What are your favorite cities to visit?**

"London is number one. In no particular order followed by Budapest, Istanbul and St. Petersburg."

### **I'm kind of surprised that you didn't mention any place in Ireland.**

"You asked about cities not countries. Ireland is my favorite country. I go there often. It's the small towns and the rural areas that make it as magical as it is. The Irish are the best people on earth. I've been fortunate enough to have made many friends there. I'm also involved in Irish harness racing. There is no money to be made in it, but the Irish love their horses and are among the greatest horsepeople on the planet."

### **What's the most important thing that you've learned in the business aspect of our sport.**

"As in most areas on commerce — sell when people are buying. You never will go broke taking a profit."

### **What's the biggest problem we have?**

"Most people would say integrity and of course it is a major problem. But I think our biggest problem has been our inability to attract youth, followed by us being parasites to the casino interests. They don't want us and I fear that someday they will get rid of us."

### **How did you come to adopt the sobriquet Harvey Schwartz by which you are known on Facebook?**

"When I first went to work in the family moving business, I was assigned to work as a dispatcher. People would call in about their household moves and when they'd ask what my name was, they'd basically say "You're the owner. You can do anything." That caused me much grief until one day I went to speak with my mom who ran the business. While I was waiting, her secretary buzzed her, 'Mrs. Rose, there's a call for you on line 4.' 'Mrs. Rose?' I questioned her. She answered, 'You don't think I'm dumb enough to give them my own name.' I then decided I needed an alias. The night before I had watched the movie "Harvey" with Jimmy Stewart who had an invisible rabbit named Harvey as his buddy. I thought Harvey would be a good name to use as an invisible identity. We were based in a very ethnic area, so I needed a proper last name and I thought Schwartz was perfect. For the record, Harvey's middle initial is "N", as in Nagila."

### **Have a question for The Curmudgeon?**

Reach him by email at: [hofmurray@aol.com](mailto:hofmurray@aol.com).

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## Late start may not affect Horse of the Year balloting

by Bob Heyden

Many of the best horses of 2020 have not yet performed. But, it might not be a problem when it comes time at year's end to determine the Horse of the Year. Consider the last four decades.

On July 5, 2014, JK She'salady debuted and would run the table at 12-for-12, enough to edge out Sweet Lou for year-end honors.

On June 29, 2007, Donato Hanover continued his long winning streak that he began at 2 with a victory at the Meadowlands. He would not leave the Big M until after winning the Hambletonian. He returned to finish the year in East Rutherford and it would be the only track where he would taste defeat at 3. He was an easy choice for Horse of the Year. All 19 wins career came consecutively.

On June 28, 1987, Mack Lobell made his sophomore debut by dominating the Yonkers Trot. Chuck Sylvester thought Mack Lobell earned a sizable rest after a 20-start 2-year-old season that saw him earn year-end honors. He posted an even better 3-year-old season, setting the new Hambletonian record and almost nailing down the Triple Crown, if not for Napoletano.

On June 23, 2012, Chapter Seven made his 4-year-old debut and turned it into the Horse of the Year award despite making just 10 starts — the fewest ever for a HOY. In those 10 starts, Chapter Seven recorded eight wins, a 1:50.1 world record and had a first over romp in the Breeders Crown against Europe's best.

On June 22, 1979, Niatross would start his career at Vernon Downs. The last pacer — or horse — to be named HOY at both 2 and 3, Niatross ran the table as a freshman with a 13-for-13 campaign.

On June 11, 1997 Malabar Man began his sophomore campaign with high expectations off an award-winning freshman season that culminated in a Breeders Crown score. Amateur driver Mal Burroughs did a great job with the son of

\$500,000 yearling Supergill, and Malabar Man earned the Horse of the Year award for Burroughs and trainer Jimmy Takter, who would win the HOY three straight years with Moni Maker capturing it in 1998 and 1999.

On June 10, 2006 Glidemaster started his Triple Crown-winning season for Blair Burgess. He won the Hambletonian on Aug. 8 and 108 days later the Yonkers Trot on Nov. 25 (the longest spread ever for the trotting Triple Crown). Glidemaster won 65.9 per cent of his record-setting total of \$1,918,701 in Triple Crown races (\$1,265,690). Compare that to Niatross in 1980, whose \$292,557 earned in just Triple Crown races that year represented just 14.7 per cent of his then record total of \$1.414,313 for a single season.

On June 4, 2009, Muscle Hill debuted as a 3-year-old and never tasted defeat, completing his career with 20 straight wins and the Horse of the Year title.

On June 1, 2002, Real Desire started his 4-year-old campaign, and first without Bettors Delight across the ring, and won 10 of 13 to take down the HOY hardware. Blair Burgess won the HOY title with a pacer and a trotter four years apart in 2002 and 2006 (with Glidemaster).

Others who started a touch later and won the HOY were: Artsplace at 4, who started on May 30 and went 16-for-16 and Fancy Crown, who began on May 26, 1984 for Ted Andrews and Billy O'Donnell.

### Have we seen the last HOY with 30 or more starts?

It certainly looks like it. It has not happened in the 21st century. In fact, it has not happened in 31 years, despite the fact that seven horses, eight times in history have won the HOY after seasons with 30 or more starts.

Here's the list:

1952 — Good Time had 33 starts. He also won the HOY in 1949 at age 3 with just 19 starts (19 15-2-1).

1954 — Stenographer, the only filly on the list, was 32 23-2-1 and outpointed Scott Frost despite his getting one more first-place vote than she (24-23).

1970 — Fresh Yankee, the only mare on this list, was never worse than second 31 20-11-0 at age 7.

1976 — Keystone Ore won 22 of 33 starts (nine seconds and a third also), giving Stanley Dancer his record seventh HOY trophy.

1978 — Abercrombie finished with the exact same wins and starts as Keystone Ore (22-for-33), with six seconds and three thirds. He was so tough he raced from the first week of May until the second week of November — 27 weeks, racing 33 times and going double heats at eight different tracks. He had 14 starts in August and September alone.

1982 — Cam Fella is the only one on this list to do this twice (1982 and 1983). He had 33 starts as a sophomore

with 28 victories and a pair of seconds. Cam won in all 11 months he raced – January through November.

1983 – Cam Fella only started 2-for-8 as a 4-year-old, but then rattled off 28 straight to end his career with a HOY record of 36 starts and 30 wins.

1989 – Matts Scooter is the last horse to do this. He had 30 starts in 1989 with 23 of them victories.

Only 10.9 per cent of the 72 HOY trophies have gone to horses who answered the call 30 or more times during their award winning season. Everyone on this list won at least 20 times.

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## HRU FOAL OF THE WEEK

### Foal of the Week

**Mark Moger**

This colt by What The Hill is the first foal out of the multiple Ohio Sires Stakes winning mare California Love, who competed against such notables as Red Storm, Impinktoo and Non Smoking in her two years on the track in 2017 and 2018. California Love, a daughter of Stormin

Normand out of Frannie's Ridge, posted a record of 9-5-5 in 31 starts. The colt, foaled in early May at Double Spring Farm in Dundee, OH, is owned by Double Spring Farm, Chris Beaver and Moger Racing LLC.

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## Hoofprints in Fog

### Scene 8 (Rage)

by Trey Nosrac

The setting is a room in an Alzheimer's ward. A young couple, Mandy and Ryan, continue to visit Martin Kilbane, an elderly horse trainer. In his lucid periods, Martin describes events in his life with remarkable clarity. In earlier sessions, he has talked about serving in the US cavalry, the death of his young wife, and his life-long struggle with alcohol.

[Scene 1](#) | [Scene 2](#) | [Scene 3](#) | [Scene 4](#) | [Scene 5](#) | [Scene 6](#) | [Scene 7](#)

### SCENE 8

(Intro music, inside moving car sound.... phone ring effect.... phone conversation tone effect)

MANDY: Hello, handsome.

RYAN: Where are you?

MANDY: Passing Walmart, be there in about five minutes.

RYAN: Don't come. Martin is having a bad day.

MANDY: How bad?

RYAN: Very bad. Sherry is on duty. She warned me when I got here that he's mad at the world, lashing out at everybody. I only stayed for 10 minutes. I'm walking out now. Let's meet at my place, we can order out and watch a movie.

MANDY: You sure I can't help? He's usually so sweet to me.

RYAN: Not today, he'd rip your head off. I'd rather you not see him like this. See you in a few.

MANDY: Okay. (phone click off and buzz)

(pause five seconds, sound of the door closing, remove phone conversation sound effect)

MANDY: Was he that bad?

RYAN: Awful, when he shouts into my face he is going to

kick my ass, it hurts. I know he is 92 with dementia, but it's hard to shrug off.

MANDY: You couldn't calm him down?

RYAN: Nope, not even steering him toward horses, he was furious about everything.

MANDY: Did you tape it?

RYAN: Yeah.

MANDY: Let me hear.

RYAN: No, it's ugly. He's ranting and swearing, it's not PG listening.

MANDY: Please, I have three brothers. Gimme your phone. (clicking on the recording device, sound change to indicate this is a recording)

RYAN: (tussle and chair scraping on floor effect), (pleading) Martin, Martin, calm down, it's me, it's Ryan, your great-grandson.

MARTIN: (loud, and will remains so) Shut the f - - - k up. And keep your filthy hands off my stuff, you got no right. (scuffling sounds)

RYAN: Martin, I'm not touching anything, let's talk, let's talk about the old days. Let's talk about your horses.

MARTIN: You don't know shit about horses or racing.

RYAN: Heaven's Rein, was the greatest trotter, but I can't find any records of her races.

MARTIN (shouts louder) Did you ever hear of Emily's Pride?

RYAN: No.

MARTIN: What a f - - - king moron. How about George Washington? How about Jesus Christ? Piss-ants like you, all do is keep your noses in those God-damn phones. I ain't talking to a man who never even heard of one of the greatest champion trotters ever. I should kick your...

(more thrashing sounds)

RYAN: Here, look, look, no box, my hands are in the air, nothing. It's just me, easy, easy, now um, um, what does the Emily's Place have to do with your horse?

MARTIN: Emily's PRIDE...P.R.I.D.E. My Heaven raced against her three times.

RYAN: And beat her?

MARTIN: NO, but Heaven was just as good, maybe better.

RYAN: I'm confused.

MARTIN: Of course you are, you're an a-hole, just like everyone else keeping me in this God Damed prison, AND



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STEALING MY PERSONAL BELONGINGS.

RYAN: Martin, nobody is taking anything.

MARTIN: If you knew a goddamn thing about trotting racing, you'd know that the best horse doesn't always win. The first race, Emily drew the rail, and we drew number nine! Nine! That means Heaven started 120 lengths behind Emily, had to dodge traffic, go three-quarters of the race on the outside, and she still finished just a length back. Even an a-hole like you should know enough geometry to know that Heaven went a longer mile and was the best of the two.

RYAN (softly) Ah, now I see. That first race, your horse had a lousy starting position, you had bad racing luck.

MARTIN: That happens in racing, you accept it and move on.

RYAN: And the second time you raced against the great horse, bad luck again?

MARTIN: NO, the second race wasn't bad luck, A CHEATIN SON-OF-A-BITCH screwed us royally, he stole the race.

RYAN: The jockey?

MARTIN: What a dumbass, we don't have JOCKEYS, we use DRIVERS.

RYAN: Okay, okay, so the driver cheated.

MARTIN: No, it was a groom named Termite, a short fat, son-of-a-bitch. Nobody liked him. He was grooming a horse in the race, a trotter that didn't belong on the same racetrack. Who knows if he was following orders or if he just laid some money on Emily, he screwed us six ways from Sunday."

RYAN: I'm still confused.

MARTIN: You're still an a-hole. Listen, and listen good. What happened was everybody was looking for the matchup with Emily and Heaven. We weren't watching that damned

Termite.

RYAN: A groom from another horse in the race, I don't get it.

MARTIN: NOBODY got it till after the race, and I was sitting in a jail cell.

RYAN: Jail! For what?

MARTIN: Assault and Battery on a termite.

RYAN: You got into a fight with a groom?

MARTIN: Not a fight, a straight-up ass-kicking.

RYAN: Why?

MARTIN: Jesus, don't you know anything. (sighs deeply) Emily and Heaven both drew outside, right next to each other, but that didn't mean a damn thing because we were the only two in that race that mattered. The other eight horses would be sucking mud because it was raining like hell, raining so damned hard the horses were going right from the paddock to behind the starting car. Whoosh, off they go, Emily and Heaven, then Heaven and Emily. They come to the finish and Emily wins by a length. It was hard to take, but I figured we got beat fair and square. BUT IT WASN'T FAIR AND SQUARE.

(Pause)

MARTIN: Don't stand there with your stupid mouth hanging open, pay attention... Phil Barton was Heaven's driver, driver, not jockey, you putz. Phil climbs off looking like a muddy mess, and the rain is coming down in sheets. Phil yells in the wind, "Check the left tire." So I get back to the barn out of the rain, out of the mud, and that damn tire is flat. When I wipe it down and look close, I see the slit, a knife slit. My mind goes back to just before the horses headed to the track when Termite leaned over and put his fat, cheating hands on the left bike wheel to say something to Phil in the pouring rain.



**Listen to this story here**





That struck me as odd cause grooms don't usually wish good luck to other drivers in a race - but I was so nervous that I JUST PAID IT NO MIND.

RYAN: You think Termite punctured your tire?

MARTIN: I KNOW HE DID. I'll go to my grave knowing Termite had a shiv in his other hand. It's a damn good thing for him that I didn't have a shiv because I'd have killed the son of a bitch instead of beating the shit out of him. Now nothing against Emily, them was good folks that raced that great mare. Emily's Pride was so damned good that she won the Hambletonian. So I'm sitting in jail, stewing that Heaven and Emily raced twice, and both times we got dealt a bad hand.

RYAN: And the third race? You said you raced the other horse three times.

MARTIN: (sound of breathing heavily with exertion, for a few seconds, voice much more subdued) That ruined everything, just about killed me. I wish it had killed me, wish I had killed Termite. I wouldn't be in this (cough, Cough, harsh coughing spasm, more coughing)

(Sound of clicking off the tape, back to normal room volume)

RYAN: Sherry heard him coughing. She came in, I went out.

MANDY: Poor Sherry, they couldn't pay me enough to work in that place. (pause) Listening to that is so strange, he never said a bad word in front of me.

RYAN: Today was nothing but hate and rage. I had to get out of there. (pause, tentatively) Do you think we all have that inside of us, that meanness, waiting to break out?

(Phone Rings)

MANDY: That's yours, it's in your jacket.

(another ring)

RYAN: Hello....Hi Sherry....At Mandy's...no, no that's fine...is it broken?... probably not for a nose....sure....no, not tonight...maybe you should give him the whole bottle...thanks, thanks for calling...I know...good night.

(Phone clicks off)

(Fade music)

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## Racing returns Tuesday at Northfield Park

Free past performances, multiple guaranteed pools, full fields and millionaire-dollar earners highlight a strong program of racing as MGM Northfield Park re-opens (without spectators) on Tuesday (May 26) (post time 6 p.m.).

The wagering menu on the 15-race card is highlighted by a \$40,000 guaranteed pool in the 13th race (20-cent Super High Five), which includes a carryover pool of \$8,134 – left over from when no one selected the top five finishers in correct order when Northfield last raced on March 18. The Super High Five also has a low 14 per cent takeout rate, as do all of Northfield's Pick 3's, Pick 4's, Pick 5's and the Jackpot Single 6. The early and late Pick 4's will also carry their normal \$10,000 Guarantees as a part of the USTA's Strategic Wagering program.

Top class horses will be in action on the track as open handicaps for both pacers and trotters headline the card. Southwind Amazon, winner of 92 career races and over \$1 million in purses, will not only face stout competition in the open pace from regular rivals Bully Pulpit and Carolina Beach – but a pair of invaders from Yonkers Raceway, Luis Alberto N and \$991,927 lifetime earner Atta Boy Dan. Real Peace, Barley Up, The Wayfaring Man and Just Toyin With Ya will also be heard from in the full field of nine (race 10 on the card).

Wind of the North, a career earner of over \$1.1 million will battle eight rivals in the co-featured open handicap trot (race 12). Perlucky, winner of two straight before racing was halted, is assigned outside in the evenly matched group.

While no spectators will be in attendance, Northfield's full card can be watched live on [northfieldpark.com](http://northfieldpark.com) (as it can be every live race night) and wagered on through all major ADW's world-wide. Northfield will also race on Wednesday, May 27; Friday, May 29; and Saturday, May 30 to round out the month of May. **Free past performances** for all four of Northfield's cards next week will be available at [www.northfieldpark.com](http://www.northfieldpark.com).

—Ayers Ratliff / MGM Northfield Park

## New York Sire Stakes shares update on 2020 season

The New York Sire Stakes (NYSS) is working closely with harness tracks throughout the state as they develop reopening plans. As soon as revised racing dates are finalized for all tracks, the NYSS will move forward with building an updated racing schedule and will share this information with participants.

"Right now we are anticipating that NYSS events will start approximately two weeks after the tracks reopen," said Kelly Young, executive director of the Agriculture & New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund. "This will help ensure that horses have time to qualify before racing begins."

Participants are reminded that horses must have a satisfactory charted performance line in the time standard within 30 days of declaration for Sire Stakes and Excelsior events.

It should not be assumed that any of the current scheduled stakes dates will stand as the days of the week that tracks race this season may change. Participants should not plan to race the first 3-year-old legs before mid-June and should not plan to race the first 2-year-old legs before the beginning of July. Additionally, the NYSS will not be racing at Buffalo Raceway this year.

Due to a significant change in revenue, it will not be possible to race a full complement of eight legs for Sire Stakes or Excelsior divisions. All ages and divisions will have an equal number of legs. More details on changes to this year's program will be forthcoming.

"The announcement by Governor Andrew Cuomo allowing racing tracks to reopen was very exciting and we are all working through the details now," said Young. "We are looking forward to providing a new schedule and getting back to the track while keeping the health and safety of our participants as a top priority."

In regard to the County Fair racing series, several racing fairs have already been canceled for this summer. The NYSS is considering a number of options to allow the program to continue this season.

"While we do not anticipate that horsemen will have options for all fairs originally scheduled, at this time, we are still planning for a racing program," said Young. "We understand that this has been a long road and we will continue to send updates and keep you informed as we navigate the future of the racing season."

Participants with questions or concerns can contact Kelly

Young in the New York Sire Stakes Office directly at [info@nysirestakes.com](mailto:info@nysirestakes.com) or (518) 388-0224.

— Jason Politi for NYSS

## **Training to commence at Mohawk with strict physical distancing protocols**

Training at Woodbine Mohawk Park with strict physical distancing protocols in place will be available from 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday (May 27) and Saturday (May 30). Training hours will be allotted by signing up on a first come first serve basis. Sign-ups will start at 3 p.m. on Monday (May 25). Trainers are limited to no more than 10 horses per day. A limit of 50 horses are permitted in the paddock during a training time slot. Training time slots will be in 2.5 hour increments (6:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., 9:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., 12 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.). All paddock COVID-19 safety protocols will be in place for training hours, including the requirement to have all personnel wearing a face mask. Only trainers and essential licensed personnel over the age of 16 will be permitted through the security check point.

[Here is the link to the online sign-up which opens on Monday at 3 pm.](#)

Please contact Dylan Allain with any questions at [dallain@woodbine.com](mailto:dallain@woodbine.com).

— Jamie Dykstra / Woodbine

## **Further Mohawk protocols for trainers and drivers**

Woodbine Mohawk Park would like to notify all drivers and trainers that when qualifiers resume on Thursday (May 28), the driver/trainer changes rooms, showers and lounge will be closed until further notice as an important COVID-19 safety precaution and physical distancing protocol.

Drivers and trainers are asked to contact Megan Walker at [mwalker@woodbine.com](mailto:mwalker@woodbine.com) or (416)-709-6793 to schedule a time to pick up their suits and other items on Monday, May 25, Tuesday, May 26 or Wednesday, May 27 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Only drivers and trainers who have scheduled a time will be permitted to pick up their suits and other items.

Woodbine Mohawk Park will be releasing its qualifying and race night paddock protocols next week in advance of the resumption of Qualifiers on Thursday.

— Jamie Dykstra / Woodbine

## **SOA of New York seeking field representative at Yonkers**

The Standardbred Owners Association of New York is seeking a field representative who will be responsible for addressing the needs of our horsemen — owners, trainers, drivers and caretakers — at Yonkers Raceway during racing hours. In this position, the field representative needs strong communication skills in order to be a fearless representative of the horsemen. A full understanding of the harness racing industry, including knowledge of the regulations governing racing, is required. The field representative will be responsible for interacting regularly with the judges and the race office and, at times, the Gaming Commission. The position requires that the field representative communicate effectively with the SOA's Officers and Board of Directors, with a particular need to keep the president of the SOA fully and timely informed as to all matters.

Interested and qualified parties should send their resume to the attention of Peter Venaglia, chairman of personnel committee c/o SOA of NY, 733 Yonkers Ave, Suite 102, Yonkers NY, 10704 or via email at [soafny@gmail.com](mailto:soafny@gmail.com).

— SOA of New York

## **SOA of New York seeking executive director**

The Standardbred Owners Association of New York is seeking an executive director who is responsible for directing and coordinating all operations of the SOA of New York. A full understanding of the horse racing industry, office management, contract negotiations, government relations, medical and pension plans, investments, insurances and strong communication skills are required.

Interested and qualified parties should send resume to the attention of Peter Venaglia, chairman of personnel committee c/o SOA of NY, 733 Yonkers Ave, Suite 102, Yonkers NY, 10704 or via email at [soafny@gmail.com](mailto:soafny@gmail.com).

— SOA of New York

## **Ontario's return to racing featured Sunday night on COSA TV**

The return of live harness racing in Ontario will be the topic of discussion during this Sunday night's Facebook Live edition of COSA TV.

Grand River Raceway's director of operations Jamie Martin will be part of the lineup as well as Clinton Raceway's GM



Ian Fleming who also serves as race secretary for several provincial racetracks from Clinton's centralized race office. Rounding out the guests will be Mark Horner who operates one of the largest stables in Southwestern Ontario and is a past chair of Standardbred Canada.

The trio will join host Greg Blanchard beginning at 7:30 p.m. As always, questions can be submitted ahead of time or during the show by visiting the COSA TV Facebook Page. The show will also be aired on the Standardbred Canada website.

—COSA

## Application available for Allen J. Finkelson Scholarship

Steven Wolf, president of the Florida Chapter of the United States Harness Racing Writers Association (USHWA), has announced that the chapter is now accepting applications for its 2020 Allen J. Finkelson Scholarship Awards.

The scholarship fund was established in memory of Hall of Famer Allen J. Finkelson, the former vice president of public relations at Pompano Park and long-time chairman of the board of the national USHWA organization.

"While our Florida Chapter was hesitant at first due to the pandemic that canceled our annual fundraising Florida Harness Racing Hall of Fame banquet," said Wolf, "we still felt we needed to continue our scholarship program, which is important for our young people to help them with the costs of tuition."

Preference for these scholarship awards will be given to a student majoring in journalism, communications or veterinarian related studies.

This year there are two sponsors of the scholarships. They are Maggie LaClair and Jay Farrar and Kathleen and Thomas H. Hicks.

Applicants must be a resident of the state of Florida and currently accepted or enrolled in a fully accredited college or university in the United States. Criteria for selection include community service, academic achievement, and leadership.

Applicants must have demonstrated scholastic ability with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 and show evidence of community service and leadership through certificates, awards and/or letters of commendation.

Fully completed applications must be postmarked no later than July 1, 2020, for consideration of an August 2020 award. Recipients may reapply annually for a maximum of four years.

Applications should be submitted/addressed to the Florida Chapter USHWA, Scholarship Committee, 3508 Sahara Springs Blvd., Pompano Beach, FL 33069.

For more information or to receive an application on the internet, visit <http://www.ushwa-florida.com> or contact via e-mail to Thomas H. Hicks at [renparlc@gate.net](mailto:renparlc@gate.net) or Steven Wolf at [stevenwolf1956@gmail.com](mailto:stevenwolf1956@gmail.com).

—Florida chapter of USHWA



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## Questions for consideration

After all the indictments and being aware that the Feds are now watching I find thoroughbred racing is unwatchable and un-bet-able. There is no handicapping that works, nothing but longshots so why would we want to flip coins with real dollars? Sure right now the tracks are happy, but soon the real customers, the ones that handicap and bet their dollars will tire of the longshot bologna and all the huge payoff Pick 6 and million-dollar pool inducements won't work on the working stiffs out there. So, if this is a sign of things to come once harness racing starts up there are many of us that may go in another direction for entertainment.

As I look at harness racing vs. thoroughbred racing's return I see a big difference in some barns ability to get their charges ready. That advantage is that many of the biggest

outfits have their own tracks. In theory, this advantage will continue until about five weeks so, again in theory, we should see short odds favorite disproportionately winning for this period. Thus, if you got tired of the longshot nonsense with the thoroughbreds you will tire quickly of the short-odds winners in the harness arena. I don't see any way to minimize the home-field advantage.

I would be interested in Hollywood Hayden's take on this perspective. He always seems like he's got his finger on the pulse of the racing community.

—David Perry / Dearborn, MI

## RE: Frank Cotolo's most recent Alternative Actions column

([full story here](#))

Let's be real, Frank. Your piece did offer some good ideas, but does anyone really believe that any of this will happen? I am betting on business as usual, which means high takeouts, beg the governor for help and maybe a few crappy promos like \$1 hot dogs and free popcorn. I hope I am wrong.

—David Haaker / Livingston NJ

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## RACE RESULTS - FRIDAY

### SCIOTO DOWNS *report*

#### Friday's Results:

**5, ScD, \$15,000, Pace**, FILLIES AND MARES NW OF \$11,000 IN THE LAST 4 STARTS OPTIONAL CLAIMING \$30,000 (W/A) AE: NW OF 10 PMRLT OR \$60,000 LIFETIME, 28.0, 55.4, 1:23.2, 1:51.3, FT

**1-Letme Fly Low (m, 5, Rockin Image--Psychotic, by Art Major)** \$7,500, \$45,000 2016 HOOSIER, Lifetime Record: 69-13-11-12, \$223,185  
O-Ct Stables LLC. B-Mystical Marker Farms LLC & Peggy C Hood & Ervin Miller Stable Inc. T-John Ackley. D-Trevor Smith.

**2-Tiffany Rocks As (m, 5, Pet Rock--Twincreeks Jewel, by Dragon Again)** \$3,750, Lifetime Record: 74-13-20-9, \$188,016  
O-Burke Racing Stable LLC & Weaver Brussemi LLC. B-Anette Karin Lorentzon & Acl Stuteri Ab. T-Ron Burke. D-Chris Page.

**3-Cult Icon (m, 5, Bettor's Delight--Yankee Icon, by Artsplace)** \$1,800, \$30,000 2016 SHS-HBG, Lifetime Record: 56-15-14-11, \$235,827  
O-Trent Stohler Stable Inc & Stately Gaits Stable & Tim A Graber. B-Fair Winds Farm Inc. T-Trent Stohler. D-John De Long.

►► [Replay](#) ►► Calls: 7T, 4T, 2, H, 1Q - Finish Order: Westsluckycam, Sugar Dance, Keene Santanna, Johns Baby Girl, Newsday, Arrival, Llama Llama

**6, ScD, \$18,000, Pace**, FILLIES AND MARES OPEN POST POSITION 1 ASSIGNED, 26.4, 55.2, 1:23.1, 1:51.2, FT

**1-Rosemary Rose (m, 6, Foreclosure N--Pantathlon, by The Panderosa)** \$9,000, \$33,000 2015 OH-SEL, Lifetime Record: 86-31-19-10, \$567,207  
O-Burke Racing Stable LLC & Jason V Melillo & Weaver Brussemi LLC. B-Ron P Salcedo. T-Ron Burke. D-Chris Page.

**2-Sally Fletcher A (m, 9, American Ideal--Im Off Limits, by Artiscape)** \$4,500, Lifetime Record: 125-32-25-18, \$402,037  
O-Blindswitch Racing Stable & Dolne Farm Services LLC & Bokers Stable. B-D P Harvey, AS & K J & S M Smith, AS. T-J D Perrin. D-Brett Miller.

**3-St Lads Gidget (m, 8, Jereme's Jet--Guelph Gal, by Armbro Emerson)** \$2,160, \$4,500 2013 CAN-YS, Lifetime Record: 173-26-30-20, \$210,687  
O-Leah R Rhoades. B-St Lads Farm, CA. T-William Rhoades. D-Aaron Merriman.

►► [Replay](#) ►► Calls: 6Q, 4T, 2H, HD, NS - Finish Order: Gypsy Merlot, Golden Paradise, Mystical Virgin

**8, ScD, \$18,000, Trot**, OPEN, 28.1, 58.0, 1:26.3, 1:55.1, FT

**1-Eye Ofa Tiger As (g, 6, Chapter Seven--Cascade As, by Mack Lobell)** \$6,750, Lifetime Record: 55-19-13-4, \$577,768  
O-Acl Stuteri Ab & Kjell Johansson, SD. B-Acl Stuteri Ab. T-Anette Lorentzon. D-Elliott Deaton.

**1-Peggy Sue (m, 5, Donato Hanover--Motivational, by Muscles Yankee)** \$6,750, Lifetime Record: 63-13-19-7, \$187,900  
O-Galliers Racing LLC. B-Kathleen La Montagne. T-Brady Galliers. D-Brady Galliers.

**3-Wildfire Seelster (m, 4, Explosive Matter--Warrawee Lassie, by Kadabra)** \$2,160, \$23,000 2017 SHS-HBG, Lifetime Record: 45-12-3-5, \$119,325  
O-Morgan L Hagerman. B-Seelster Farms Inc, CA. T-Herman Hagerman. D-Tyler Smith.

►► [Replay](#) ►► Calls: 3, 3, 1, 1, T - Finish Order: Cantab Lindy, Classic Venture, Milford's Z Tam, Dylan The Great, Workintonbroadway

**9, ScD, \$15,000, Trot**, NW OF \$11,000 IN THE LAST 4 STARTS OPTIONAL CLAIMING \$30,000 (W/A) AE: NW OF 10 PMRLT OR \$60,000 LIFETIME, 28.1, 57.3, 1:26.1, 1:54.4, FT

**1-Signal Hill (g, 6, Muscle Hill--Special Appeal, by Cantab Hall)** \$7,500, \$250,000 2015 LEX-SEL, Lifetime Record: 51-12-6-6, \$175,476  
O-Serenity Racing Stables. B-Brittany Farms LLC. T-Danny Collins. D-Aaron Merriman.

**A LEXINGTON SUCCESS STORY.**  
THIS WINNER WAS SOLD AT THE LEXINGTON YEARLING SALE.

 **Preferred Equine** MIXED SALE  
GRADUATE



## RACE RESULTS - FRIDAY (CONTINUED)

**2-Windsun Missile** (g, 7, Kadabra--Windsun Hampton, by Ken Warkentin) \$3,750, \$40,000 2014 SHS-HBG, Lifetime Record: 131-19-23-12, \$175,479  
O-Cheryle A Perrin. B-Windsun Farm Inc, CA. T-J D Perrin. D-Brett Miller.

**3-A Royal Line** (g, 4, Royalty For Life--Direct Dial, by Balanced Image) \$1,800, Lifetime Record: 36-8-4-4, \$92,187  
O-Oldford Racing LLC. B-Robert McIntosh Stables Inc, CA & Michael P Kohler. T-Terry Deters. D-Kayne Kauffman.

►► [Replay](#) ►► Calls: 1H, 1Q, 1H, 2, 2 - Finish Order: Cruzen Cassi, Black Mamba As, Just A Passenger, Northmedo Mission, Voyage To Paris, Iron Mine Johnny, Perfect Chapter As

## RACE RESULTS - SATURDAY

### SCIOTO DOWNS *report*

#### Saturday's Results:

**5, ScD, \$18,000, Pace**, HORSES AND GELDINGS OPEN, 26.0, 54.4, 1:22.0, 1:50.0, FT

**1-My Hero Ron** (g, 8, Well Said--Erma La Em, by Cam's Card Shark) \$9,000, \$80,000 2013 LEX-SEL, Lifetime Record: 168-37-34-36, \$999,663  
O-Brian Witt. B-Hanover Shoe Farms Inc. T-Danny Dubeansky. D-Aaron Merriman.

**A LEXINGTON SUCCESS STORY.**  
THIS WINNER WAS SOLD AT THE LEXINGTON YEARLING SALE.

 **Preferred Equine** MIXED SALE GRADUATE

**2-Gd Western Joe** (h, 5, Real Desire--Western Whirl, by Western Ideal) \$4,500, \$15,000 2016 HOOSIER, Lifetime Record: 73-19-17-10, \$463,621  
O-Burke Racing Stable LLC & Hen-Shaut Stable & J&T Silva- Purnel & Libby & Weaver Brussemi LLC. B-Gerald C Yoder. T-Ron Burke. D-Chris Page.

**3-Gerardo** (g, 5, Rockin Image--Amarillo Sky, by Modern Art) \$2,160, Lifetime Record: 74-11-25-12, \$248,600  
O-Mark R Bogen. B-Melanie Wrenn. T-Kayne Kauffman. D-Kayne Kauffman.

►► [Replay](#) ►► Calls: 2, 2, 1T, 1H, 2 - Finish Order: Lifewithjohn, Sectionline Bigry, Hunchie, I'm A Big Deal, General Dolan, Air Strike

**7, ScD, \$15,000, Pace**, HORSES AND GELDINGS NON WINNERS OF \$11,500 IN THE LAST 4 STARTS OPTIONAL CLAIMING \$30,000 CLAIMER (W/A) AE: NON WINNERS OF 10 PMRLT OR \$60,000 LIFETIME, 27.1, 55.0, 1:22.3, 1:50.3, FT

**1-Escapetothebeach** (g, 4, Somebeachsomewhere--Shellscape, by Artiscape) \$7,500, \$175,000 2017 LEX-SEL, Lifetime Record: 39-9-7-7, \$313,971  
O-Odds On Racing. B-Bamond Racing LLC. T-Virgil Morgan Jr. D-Brett Miller.

**A LEXINGTON SUCCESS STORY.**  
THIS WINNER WAS SOLD AT THE LEXINGTON YEARLING SALE.

 **Preferred Equine** YEARLING & MIXED SALE GRADUATE

**2-Docdor Friskie** (g, 7, Feelin Friskie--Lady Shuffle, by Cam's Card Shark) \$3,750, \$19,000 2014 OH-SEL, Lifetime Record: 104-22-14-17, \$305,789  
O-Miller Racing Stable Inc. B-Midland Acres Inc. T-Ryan Miller. D-Kayne Kauffman.

**3-Whiskey Friskie** (g, 7, Feelin Friskie--Be My Lucky Star, by Camluck) \$1,800, \$16,000 2014 OH-SEL, Lifetime Record: 167-16-33-28, \$301,644  
O-Scott B Albaugh & Bradley N Delaney. B-Midland Acres Inc. T-Deborah Swartz. D-Trevor Smith.

►► [Replay](#) ►► Calls: H, 1Q, 1H, 1, H - Finish Order: Rockn Motion, Captain Dolmio N, World Of Secrets, Champion Rock, Ashlee's Four Star, Big Game Hunter, Good Rockin

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