

DOWN THE STRETCH

CANADA'S MOST INFORMATIVE AND ENTERTAINING HORSE RACING NEWSPAPER

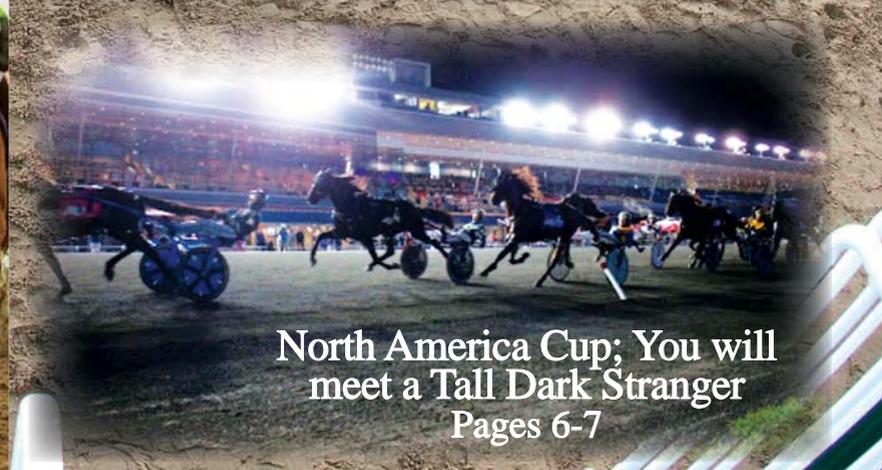
Pages 4-5 **2020 Queen's Plate: He had his eye on the prize**



Kentucky Derby

Pages 10-11

Churchill Downs/Coady Photography



North America Cup; You will meet a Tall Dark Stranger
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Michael Burns Photo

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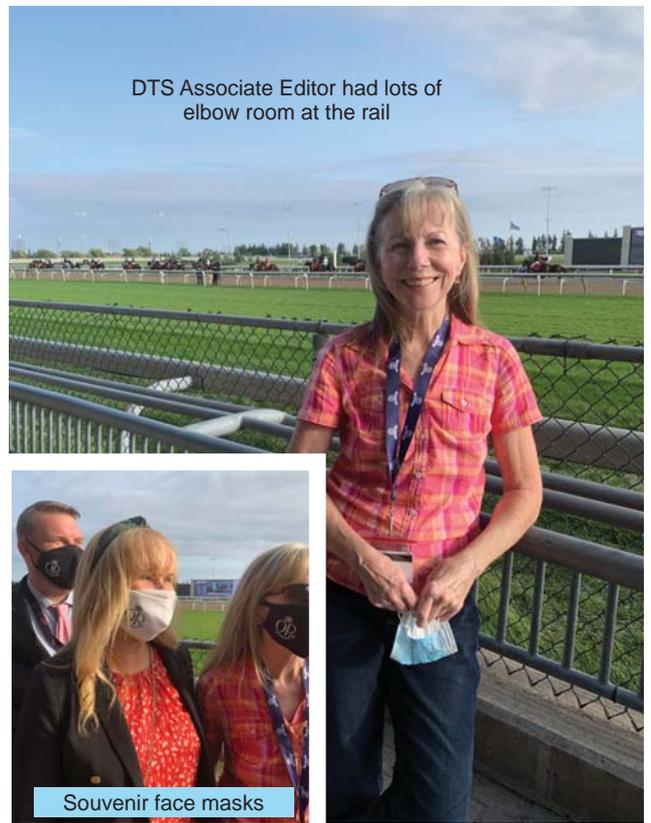
Seen at the 161st Queen's Plate



Trainer Roger Attfield



This was the crowd for QP2020



DTS Associate Editor had lots of elbow room at the rail

Souvenir face masks

How great is Pink Lloyd?

By Brittney Mayotte



The \$2 million horse

Michael Burns Photo

Canadian racing icon Pink Lloyd took the biggest slice of the pie and boosted his cash stash past the \$2 million mark in career earnings with another winning effort in Grade III Vigil Stakes on Saturday, September 5 at Woodbine Racetrack.

Trained by Canadian Hall of Famer Robert Tiller, Pink Lloyd nearly matched his own track record on the Tapeta, sprinting 6 furlongs in 1:08.06. He came within one hundredth of a second of his mark while carrying 128 pounds.

Track announcer Robert Geller called it one of the best starts of Pink Lloyd's career as the popular chestnut gelding broke well from post seven with a head in front early. He settled into stalking position behind a quartet of early leavers before making his winning move on the final turn for Rafael Hernandez.

Pink Lloyd rallied here a clear winner with Olympic Runner, who finished a neck back in their last Grade III Bold Venture match-up, closing from the backfield for the runner-up honours once again.

City Boy, among the dueling front-runners through early fractions of :21.97 and :43.92, finished 1-1/2 lengths behind in third and just a half-length in front of Eskiminzin, Malibu Secret, Blind Ambition, and Roaring Forties. Silent Jimmie and Not So Quiet completed the order of finish.

"He's so dear to my heart. We believe in him so much," said Tiller, though admitting he was the most nervous he's been in a long time today. "He's going to get two months off now and he deserves it. We'll be back in the fall."

Bred in Ontario by John Carey and owned by Entourage Stable, the gelded son of Old Forester is now four-for-four during his eight year-old campaign and has won 26 of his 31 starts lifetime.

He previously reeled off 11 consecutive victories from 2017 into 2018, and is currently riding a 10-race win streak following a perfect season in 2019.

The newly minted double millionaire boasts a record four Vigil Stakes victories, six Sovereign Awards, and a total of 23 Stakes wins among his accomplishments. Taking the \$90,000 winner's share of the purse, he now has \$2,066,330 in career earnings.

"I don't think you're going to find another horse like him again. He's a Canadian racing icon," said Tiller. "This is a true, true champion. And I've said it many times, I just love him to death and he just keeps amazing me."

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the race is that Pink Lloyd paid \$3.80 to win. That's his most generous payoff since he paid \$6.10 winning the Jacques Cartier Stakes on May 4, 2019.

THE EDITOR WEIGHS IN



I saw my first Queen's Plate live in 1967. I was still in high school, not yet 17. There were four or five of us. We did not have reserved seats and back then, with crowds that stretched the capacity of Woodbine, not reserving meant you spent your day on the concrete apron down by the rail.

That race was won by Conn Smythe's Jammed Lovely, one of many fillies that have prevailed in Canada's biggest race. My group was tapped by the time the horses paraded for the Plate. We gathered quarters and dimes together and were able to come up with a \$2 bet. We put it on the longest shot, a very un-famous horse named In The Ring. From our lowly perch with the mob at the rail, we had no idea where In The Ring was and when several horses swept by at the wire, we couldn't pick him out. For about 30 seconds, we believed there was a chance that In The Ring was among the cavalcade that seemed to hit the wire together. Was there a chance we had hit a 200-1 shot?

And then, down the dirt track, came a loping In The Ring, last by over 100 lengths.

There were over 30,000 at Woodbine that day. I was also at the Queen's Plate in 1973. The Queen was there

that day and her presence drew a record crowd of over 40,000.

In 2016, when Sir Dudley Digges shocked at 16-1, Woodbine claimed a 'non-royal' record of 37,063. I didn't bet Sir Dudley Digges, but by virtue of my attendance, I have been at the Plate for its largest crowds and now... for its smallest.

Down The Stretch Associate Editor Eleanor LeBlanc (she's quite cute – look on page 2) and I were granted media status for this year's Queen's Plate, so we joined a fairly exclusive club of maybe 200 people; owners, trainers, Woodbine staffers who were allowed - social distancing emphasized – to mingle in our masks in the front of the stands.

It was weird. It was different. But it was also quite special. Premium parking. Lovely late summer weather, and no mob to battle if one wished to lean against the rail as the horses came thundering past. Not all that unusual was a longshot leading from beginning to end. Our Plate coverage consumes pages 4-5. Do observe that Plate winner, Mighty Heart, is only the second horse to run the Plate faster than 2:02, joining the great Izvestia,

Juts a few hours later, there was a lovely story at Mohawk as On A Streak broke his maiden to win the William Wellwood Stakes and, with that, the first-time winner earned a free shot at the inaugural Mohawk Million for two year-olds. All the other slots in the race were sold for \$110,000 a pop. Also, as you will read on page 13, this was the biggest race ever won by 28 year-old Scott Young.

There was also the Kentucky Derby run in September (which is now the new May!) and Authentic's very impressive win (page 10). Authentic's time of 2:00.61 was also very impressive. Maybe the suits who run horse racing will consider that three year-olds can run better in late summer than mid spring.

The North America Cup ran several weeks later than usual, but it was worth waiting for, especially for Canadian Marvin Katz and the monster pacer he owns named Tall Dark Stranger. Read about this on page 6. On page 7, Woodbine's Mark McKelvie wraps up the Maple Leaf Trot and the Canadian Pacing Derby. Actually, we 'sampled' a lot of local writers for this issue. Brittney Mayotte, Bill Tallon, and Chris Lomon carved out some stirring renditions of the Queen's Plate and the lucrative undercard, and Lomon wrote a wonderful piece (pages 14-15) on trainer/owner Randy Thompson, his unlikely trio, and a horse called Marjorie's Dream that gave them their biggest thrill.

We always count on long-time, award winning racing writer, Jennifer Morrison to keep us up to speed with the racing at Ajax Downs. Morrison has a story on page 25 about how the quarter horse industry is flourishing even in difficult times, but three pages earlier, thanks to Morrison, you will be informed of a great day (and some great rappin') from rider Tony Phillips on the quarter horse track.

Garnet Barnsdale, a self confessed chronic bettor, has a troubling essay (page 21) about a mind boggling disqualification by the stewards following a harness race at The Red Mile.

There are many ways to become a professional harness driver, but 30 year-old Daryl Thiessen chose a unique route. He was a rodeo clown, battling bulls for many years until he figured his broken and battered body would be much safer in a sulky. Check him out on page 23.

And I am sure you have noticed that we now feature three Owners of the Month each issue. On page 18 it's thoroughbred owner, Jordan Lay. On page 19, Mohawk race caller Ken Middleton explains what it was like to call a harness race when his own horse won, and on page 20, you will find Ruth Barbour, owner of the best ever quarter horse, a lovely fellow called Country Boy 123.

There may be a pandemic. We may have to be careful about how close we can get to each other. But horse racing in this province is doing great. The proof is in the 28 pages of this month's issue of **Down The Stretch**, Canada's most informative and entertaining horse racing newspaper.

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One-eyed Mighty Heart takes Queen's Plate Carroll runs 1-2

by Chris Lomon

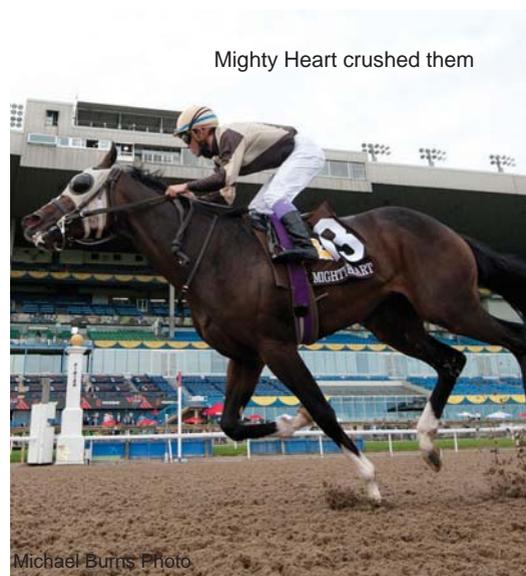
Mighty Heart lived up to his name in a dominating score in the 161st running of the Queen's Plate, as the one-eyed colt trounced his 13 rivals on September 12 at Woodbine.

Originally slated for June 27, North America's oldest continually run race was moved to September 12 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the connections of Mighty Heart, it was well worth the wait.

Bred and owned by Lawrence Cordes, the son of Dramedy flew under the radar leading up to the Plate, but the Ontario-bred bay, in his first Stakes test, landed in the winners circle courtesy of a sensational coast-to-coast score in the \$1 million classic.

Sent off at 13-1, Mighty Heart, one of three horses in the race trained by Josie Carroll, was directed to the front from post 13 as first-time Plate jockey Daisuke Fukumoto guided



Mighty Heart crushed them

Michael Burns Photo

his charge over to the rail as the field passed the wire for the first time.

Mighty Heart was joined to the outside by Tecumseh's War, while Truebelieve sat third, with Plate Trial champion Clayton settling in fourth. Woodbine Oaks, presented by Budweiser, champ and Plate mutuel favourite Curlin's Voyage (5-2) was forced into an outside journey as the field headed into the first turn of the 1 1/4-mile Tapeta test.

There was no change in the top four positions as Mighty Heart led the field through an opening quarter-mile in :23.57.

One length on top after a half-mile in :47.61, Mighty Heart was still yet to be tested, but just after the 1:12.70 three-quarters mark, Curlin's Voyage, under Patrick Husbands, began a bid from eighth. Rafael Hernandez, aboard Clayton, attempted to get the jump on the Oaks champ, and soon engaged the pacesetter.

As the field turned for home, Clayton was roused to engage Mighty Heart, but to no avail, as the leader easily repelled the challenge and rocketed home to a rousing 7/2 length victory.

Belichick, under Slade Callaghan, rallied to grab second spot, while Clayton settled for third, a neck in front of

Tecumseh's War. Curlin's Voyage, Canada's champion two year-old filly, was a head back in fifth.

It was a one-two Plate finish for Carroll, who celebrated her third "Gallop for the Guineas" crown. The Canadian Hall of Fame inductee took the 2006 edition with Edenwold and the 2011 running with filly Inglorious.

The final time was 2:01.98, the second fastest Plate run since 1957. Izvestia, who went on to win the 1990 Triple Crown, won in 2:01 4/5ths.

"I was concerned for a minute or two with the quick fractions, but he looked like he was settling and doing it easily," said Carroll. "We knew he'd go all day and he sure did. You know what, he's just a very exciting horse who's come a long way for Mr. Cordes, who's had a lot of confidence in him from the start."

Fukumoto and Carroll are now a perfect three-for-three when teaming together.

"Unbelievable," said Fukumoto, making his first Plate start. "I can't explain...he's feeling good today, he bolt good. I saw that nobody [was leaving] so I just sent him and he just kept going. After the wire, he still kept going, he didn't stop there."

Mighty Heart is now 2-0-1 from five starts. He broke his maiden in his third start, a 4 1/4 length score at 1 1/16 miles on July 11 at Woodbine, and arrived at the Plate off a third place performance at the same distance.

"He was sharp today," praised Fukumoto. "I thought it was fast but I took the lead so I can't do anything, you know...I let him go. He only has one eye, but he's got a big heart, a mighty heart."

The \$400,000 Prince of Wales Stakes, a 1 3/16-mile race over Fort Erie's dirt oval on September 29, is the next race in the tri-surface OLG Canadian Triple Crown series, which winds up with the \$400,000 Breeders' Stakes at 1 1/2 miles on the E. P. Taylor Turf Course on October 24.

Mighty Heart returned \$28.50 and combined with Belichick for the all-Josie Carroll exactor worth \$730.40.

Francatelli equals inner turf record in King Corrie Stakes

by Brittney Mayotte



Francatelli, my dear

Michael Burns Photo



161ST
QUEEN'S PLATE
WOODBINE RACETRACK, SEPTEMBER 12

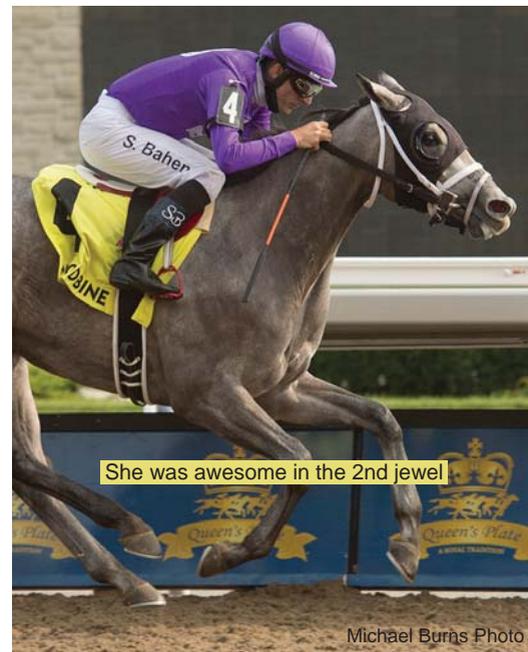
There were four other Stakes races on Plate day. In the \$100,000 King Corrie Stakes for three year-olds, favourite Francatelli (\$4.90) equaled the track record for 5 furlongs on the inner turf. Owned by trainer Cathal Lynch and Maribeth Sandford, the City Zip-Salary Drive gelding was a dominant winner on the front-end in :55.46, matching the record set by Spanish Ballerina on July 30. Lontano followed 4 1/4 lengths behind in second, with Forester's Turn another three-quarters of a length back in third.

"He's amazing," said winning jockey Justin Stein. "We left the gate, he got his stride right away and he was cruising. I knew we were covering ground pretty quick, but he was doing it easy, just like a fast gallop. He's got a big stride and he's really athletic. He's huge; I couldn't believe the speed he could show going five-eighths. He's strong and just way faster than the rest of them."

Francatelli earned his third consecutive victory from five lifetime starts.

Mizzen Beau blows them away in Bison City

by Chris Lomon



She was awesome in the 2nd jewel

Michael Burns Photo

Mizzen Beau, under Steve Bahen, was strong early and powerful late in her conquest of the \$250,000 Bison City Stakes.

The mile and one-sixteenth Bison City, second leg of the Triple Tiara for Canadian-foaled three year-old fillies, was missing Curlin's Voyage, who went off as the betting choice in the Queen's Plate.

Breaking sharply from the gate, Mizzen Beau was guided towards the rail by Bahen, as Infinite Patience and Truth Hurts settled in second and third, respectively, around the first turn and through an opening quarter-mile in :23.49. Mutuel favourite Afleet Katherine, who was runner-up to Curlin's Voyage in the Woodbine Oaks, sat

fifth along the rail and would never muster a threat.

It was status quo for the top flight after a half-mile clip in :47.68, as Mizzen Beau maintained a comfortable one length lead.

Down the stretch, Bahen and Mizzen Beau dashed away from their rivals with ease, widening their advantage down the lane and winning by 4¾ lengths in 1:44.35.

“She broke real sharp, and she’s kind of a small little filly,” said Bahen. “Norm [Casse] just said kind of let her be happy where she is like last time, and she was up there kind of tugging on me, so I said, ‘OK, this is where we’re going to be’ just hoping she’d settle down, and she did down the backside. Was perfect.”

The win was the third from nine starts for the daughter of Mizzen Mast who is trained by Norm Casse for Daniel Investment holdings. She paid \$19.10.

The third and final leg in the series is the \$250,000 Wonder Where Stakes, at one mile and one-quarter on the turf, on October 25.

Rideforthecause finishes strongly to capture Canadian Stakes

by Bill Tallon

Rideforthecause, rallying from next-to-last in the field of eight, launched a relentless rally around the final turn under rider David Moran and blew past 4-5 favorite Cambier Park for a convincing 4 length score in the \$286,000 Canadian Stakes at a mile and an eighth on the turf.

Trained by Gail Cox, Rideforthecause was notching her first Stakes win while making her tenth career start.

“I had a great trip,” said Moran. “She settled back there nice and relaxed. I just got myself in a good position to take on Raffi (jockey Rafael Hernandez, aboard Cambier Park). And when I felt her picking up and kicking by him,



Sam Son Farm surprises

Michael Burns Photo

I said, ‘Oh, we have a shot to win this!’ and she kept going very gamely.”

Rideforthecause stopped the clock in 1:45.

“This filly loves this distance,” said Cox. “I think she’s run really well this year; she had one race where she was sort of too close to the pace and didn’t run the greatest, but she’s a tough filly. She just hasn’t had the opportunity to get the distance very often.”

Rideforthecause, owned by Sam Son Farm, notched her fourth career victory. This was her second straight win, which makes that \$47.20 payoff very generous.

Stein doubles in stakes up action with Ruling Angel winner Artie’s Princess

by Brittney Mayotte

Now the leading jockey at Woodbine, Justin Stein struck again to bookend the Stakes action on Queen’s Plate day, winning the \$100,000 Ruling Angel Stakes for



Another win for Justin Stein

Michael Burns Photo

three-year-old fillies with the Wesley Ward-trained Artie’s Princess.

Artie’s Princess, the 2-1 second choice in the five-horse field, broke well and was joined by 27-1 longshot Positive Danger at the rail in an early tussle for top spot through the opening quarter-mile in :22.27.

Artie’s Princess won that battle and then rebuffed Avie’s Samurai, who offered up a challenge into the turn. Artie’s Princess took off, widening to as much as 5 lengths at the top of the lane, and cruised home a winner in a spiffy 1:14.97 over 6 1/2 furlongs on the main track.

“I had horse left,” said Stein of the pace battle on the backside. “I saved some pony and around the turn I can see out of my periphery the horses on the outside coming, and I was just sitting and waiting for the quarter pole to chirp at her and see if she’s going to run.”

Artie’s Princess has won 2 of 4 races in 2020 and is 4 for 6 lifetime. She paid \$6.50 and was Stein’s third win of the day.

Canadian Premier Yearling Sale Sees Increase in Sale Median

There was a 12% increase in the median sale price at the annual Canadian Premier Yearling Sale held at the Woodbine Sales Pavilion on September 2. The total amounts paid for 142 yearlings was \$2,795,300. The average decreased slightly from \$21,538 in 2019 to \$19,685, the median increased by 12% to \$14,500 and the buyback rate decreased.

Peter Berringer, President and Sales Chair of the CTHS (Ontario Division), stated that “With no individual yearlings selling for over \$100,000 this year and with the delay of the beginning of racing and the lifestyle changes due to the COVID-19 health pandemic, the CTHS was pleased to see the median of the sale increase by 12% from \$13,000 to \$14,500. Some of this increase can be attributed to all the enhanced viewing

and bidding options, with over 200 people registering for online bidding, a new incentive introduced for the 2020 sale.”

The top three yearlings sold are as follows:

Hip #15, a Chestnut Colt by Old Forester selling for \$90,000. The colt out of the Holidaysatthefarm mare was purchased by John Di Scola and consigned by Cara Bloodstock (Bernard McCormack), Agent.

Hip #119, a Bay Filly by Mr Speaker selling for \$82,000. The filly out of the She Stands Proud mare was purchased by Jim Menzies and consigned by Hill ‘N’ Dale Sales Agency, Agent.

Hip #136 a Chestnut Colt by Langfuhr selling for \$82,000. The colt out of the Sweet Bama Breeze mare was purchased by Derek Chin and consigned by Hill ‘N’

Dale Sales Agency, Agent.

Other yearlings that went for a good price include a bay colt by Point of Entry out of Jesters Jazz that sold for \$60,000. The purchaser was JDLP Holdings and the consignor was Susan Foreman. Gail Wood, agent for Woodlands, sold a grey filly by Midnight Lute out of LaNina for \$44,000. This one was bought by D. Di Lalla. And Cudney Stables departed with \$40,000 to the Ballycroy Training Stable for a colt by Vancouver out of Miss Blakely.

To view the results and statistics of the 2020 Canadian Premier Yearling Sale, please visit www.cthsont.com/current-public-sale.html. For further information, please visit www.cthsont.com or contact the CTHS at 416-675-3602.



North America Cup[®] at Mohawk:



Tattoo Artist to win by 2 lengths in 1:48.2. Moneyman Hill (Jonathan Drury), a 127-1 shot finished third and Odds On Osiris (Sylvain Filion) was fourth.

Tall Dark Stranger is owned by Crawford Farms, Caviart Farms, Howard Taylor, and Canadian Marvin Katz.

“I’ve been doing this for a very long time and I’ve been fortunate to have had many great horses,” said Katz. “But I think this guy really rates up with some of the greatest horses we’ve ever seen. This is historic. What he’s done tonight has never been done before. He won the Metro as a two year-old, he won the Breeders Crown – he’s come back to win the Meadowlands Pace, the Cane Pace, and he’s won the North America Cup. Somebeachsomewhere, Captainteacherous... they couldn’t do it, but he’s done it.”

History will show that Tall Dark Stranger is the only harness horse with the Metro, Breeders Crown, Meadowlands Pace, Cane Pace, and the NA Cup on his résumé.

Nancy Takter is the trainer of Tall Dark Stranger. Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, she was unable to come to Canada, but the thrill was just as great watching from south of the border.

“This is an extra-special colt in extraordinary circumstances,” she says. “I’m so proud of the horse and my team.”

Winning driver Gingras deserves extra props. He wanted to assure that he could drive Tall Dark Stranger, so he went through all the necessary protocol to come to Canada two weeks ago. Obviously, Tall Dark Stranger is special to him.

“I rolled him to three-quarters pretty hard but he just never quits,” he said. “He’s just a tremendous horse – the best pacing colt I’ve ever driven, there’s no doubt in my mind. He’s just an amazing animal. I feel awesome, there’s no doubt about it. This means so much. I couldn’t be any happier right now.”

Tall Dark Stranger improved to 14 for 16 and pushed his earnings close to \$2,000,000.

“I think he’s just stronger than they are right now, and he can get them tired just by trying to keep up with him,” added Gingras.

Just \$3.20 to win on Tall Dark Stranger and the exactor with Tattoo Artist was worth \$16.20. With the bomber coming third, the \$2 tri kicked back \$476.40, and the \$1 superfecta rendered \$2,596.30.

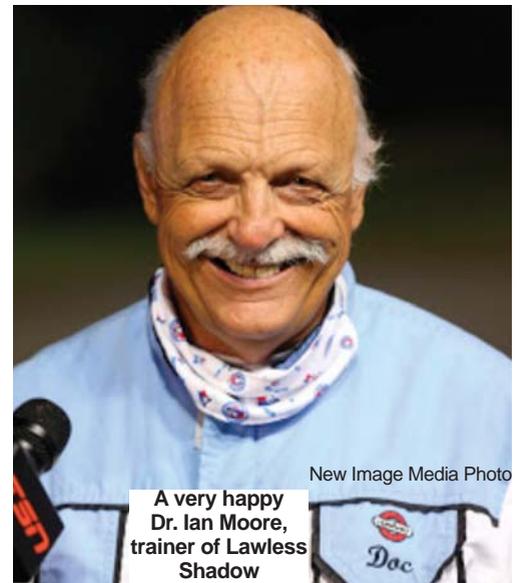
On a night when more than \$2.5 million was available in purses, there were several other Stakes races.

The Armbr Flight was worth \$220,000 for fillies and mares and Hey Livvy blistered her opponents to win by almost 2 lengths in 1:51.2. Trevor Henry did the steering

Shadow, driven by Bob McClure had to start from post 9. That was no problem. McClure put Lawless Shadow right on top with a quick opening quarter of :26.3. That,



apparently, intimidated his 9 opponents and Lawless Shadow continued to lead past the half in :56 and through three quarters in 1:24.2. With a :28 final quarter, Lawless Shadow was able to repel a late moving Ucantouchthis



(Chris Christoforou) to win by a diminishing head in 1:52.2. Dr. Ian Moore is the winning trainer and he co-owns with others, including former NHL star Serge Savard. Lawless Shadow paid \$15.

In the \$400,000 Fan Hanover Stakes for three year-old fillies, Party Girl Hill was made the 4-5 choice and she pulled Doug McNair to a convincing front-running



victory in 1:49.2. Chantal Mitchell trains this one for Tom Hill of Hamilton. Just \$3.70 for the win ticket.

There was a second Nassagaweya Stakes for \$117,000 and Bob McClure scored his third win of the night with Abuckabett Hanover who came flying down the middle of the track late to win by a length in 1:52.1. Abuckabett Hanover is trained by Tony Alagna and the win ticket was worth \$5.10.

And the tenth race Saturday night at Mohawk was the \$400,000 Roses Are Red Stakes for fillies and mares and it was Warrawee Ubeaut going to the front just past the opening quarter for NA Cup winner Yannick Gingras. Warrawee Ubeaut’s next three quarters were :28, :27.4, and :27.1 for a final time of 1:49.2 and victory by 1¼



Tall Dark Stranger makes history

With a no-doubt-about-it victory in the 37th \$1,000,000 Pepsi North America Cup at Mohawk Park on August 29, the three year-old Tall Dark Stranger now stands unique among pacers. Driven aggressively by Yannick Gingras, Tall Dark Stranger allowed Tattoo Artist (Bob McClure) to get on top in a blistering first quarter of :25.4, at which point Tall Dark Stranger took over. The son of Bettors Delight led to the half in :53.3 and it appeared no one was brave enough to challenge on the outside. It was Tall Dark Stranger with the uncontested lead after three quarters in 1:21 flat and, with a final quarter of :27.1, Tall Dark Stranger repelled a very game



for trainer Jeff Gillis and the filly paid \$12.70.

In the first of two divisions of the Nassagaweya Stakes with a purse of \$117,000 for two year-old pacers, Lawless



A bet of a buck on Abuckbett Hanover was good

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Warrawee Ubeaut takes a victory lap

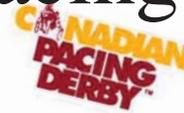
New Image Media Photo

lengths. She's a four year old trained by Ron Burke, who is a co-owner. The win ticket was worth \$5.90.

Saturday evening's Pepsi North America Cup card established a new Pepsi North America Cup handle record of \$5,619,402. The handle was headlined by \$1.1 million in new money wagered on the Jackpot Hi-5 mandatory payout in the thirteenth race. The payoff of \$7,795.80 for a \$1 wager seems pretty inflated considering the 9-5 favourite, Traceur Hanover (Louis Philippe-Roy) won with a 7-1 shot second, the second choice at 4-1 in third, followed by a 15-1 and a 12-1.

Maple Leaf Trot and Canadian Pacing Derby

By Mark McKelvie



Atlanta bounced back from a miscue in her last start to win the \$560,000 Maple Leaf Trot in 1:50.4 on September 5 at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

The five year-old mare shot off cover for driver Yannick Gingras at the head of the stretch and powered by rivals for a 4 length score in 1:50.4. In doing so, the Ron Burke trainee matched the Stakes record held by Guardian Angel As (2019) and Mister Herbie (2012).

"All the credit goes to Ron Burke," said Gingras of Atlanta's bounce back performance off a break in last Saturday's Armbr Flight. "A guy like him with the brain he has, right away after the race last week he called me and said, 'I know what the problem is. We changed the shoes four starts back and it went good the first start, the next start it was a little worse, and then a little worse, and then last week she made a break,' but the memory the guy has is unreal and all the credit to him tonight because she definitely bounced back big."

Off the gate, Crystal Fashion blasted to the lead in a :26.3 opening-quarter. Lindy The Great ignored a rail spot and kept marching on, clearing to command quickly in the second split. The new leader saw the front briefly, as Manchego and driver Louis Philippe Roy had their eyes on making the front, despite a second-tier starting spot.

Manchego hit the half in :54.3 and Roy kept his foot on the gas pedal, trotting a :27.2 third-quarter to reach that marker in 1:22.



Atlanta beat the boys

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Guardian Angel As, last year's champion, moved to the outside racing to the half to lead the outside charge, while Atlanta and driver Gingras moved out from fifth and received a second-over tow around the final turn.

In the stretch, Atlanta stormed by her rivals and trotted off to her third win of the season and 23rd lifetime. Lindy The Great dug in and grabbed second, while Gimpanzee, the even-money favourite, finished third after following Atlanta. Crystal Fashion was fourth, while Manchego dropped back to fifth.

"Atlanta felt so strong and I had a handful of trot in the last turn, and when I tipped her she came off cover like a sports car," said Gingras. "I knew right then even



Yannick Gringras and the owners of Atlanta

New Image Media Photo

though Manchego was up by five that I'd catch her, she was tremendous."

Atlanta adds the Maple Leaf Trot to her Hall of Fame career. The victory is not only redemption from last week's break, but also a runner-up finish in last year's Maple Leaf Trot.

"She's a great mare and Ronnie said after last week not to worry, made a couple of adjustments and we'll win her," said co-owner Brad Grant. "I don't know what to say, but to do it here at Mohawk Park, I wish it was crowded."

Atlanta has now earned over \$400,000 this season to bring her career total to \$2,525,160 for owners Crawford Farms Racing, Grant, and Howard Taylor. She paid \$7.60 to win.

The Maple Leaf Trot has now seen a mare win three of the last six editions, as Atlanta joins Hannelore Hanover and Bee A Magician as recent winners.

Driver James MacDonald engineered his second consecutive Canadian Pacing Derby stunner, guiding Dorsoduro Hanover to a 40-1 win.

The Ron Burke trained Dorsoduro Hanover and MacDonald were fifth-over and in ninth place, turning for home but swept by rivals promptly for a 1:48.4 victory in the \$540,000 event.

"I always though the seven claimer was my race," joked MacDonald, who also drove Courtly Choice to a 34-1 upset in last year's event. "I'll take the Derby; it's a real honour just to be in it and to win it...I can't even put it in words."

A hot opening-quarter of :25.1 was put up by American History after rocketing off the gate along with rail starter Bettors Wish and Backstreet Shadow. Bettors Wish quickly rushed from third to first and led by the half in 52.4.

In the third quarter, Backstreet Shadow come first up at Bettors Wish with the pacers dueling by three-quarters in 1:21.1.

The field fanned out wide with the front horses tiring at the head of the lane, setting up a wild finish that saw

Dorsoduro Hanover sweep by to win by 3½ lengths.

Dancin Lou came from third-over to finish second, while Century Farroh was third after sitting second-over turning for home. Sintra finished fourth.

A five year-old gelding, Dorsoduro Hanover came into the 'Pacing Derby' off a hard-closing third-place finish in the Dan Patch at Hoosier on August 22. The Burke trainee



Bombs away with Dorsoduro Hanover!

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is now three for eight on the season and sports career numbers of 17 wins and over \$1.9 million earned for owners Burke Racing Stable, JandT Silva Pumel & Libb, Weaver Brusceci and Wingfield Brothers. This was just his first win in 9 tries in 2020.

"Mark Weaver had messaged me earlier in the week and told me the horse had been great, but just had been drawing terrible, and then the draw came out and he drew post-eight," said MacDonald. "It was one of those races when it looks like there are four or five or six that can win, if you're in the outer flow and they get battling it's usually a long shot that comes in. Ronnie did such a great job, they were at the half in :52.4 and I was just standing



But did they bet on him?

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up in the stirrups, like he was ready to go. Thanks a lot for the drive."

Dorsoduro Hanover's victory gave trainer Burke a sweep of the huge purses that night, bookending the win in the Maple Leaf Trot by Atlanta.

A \$2 win ticket on Dorsoduro Hanover returned \$88.

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Kentucky Derby, 2020

Authentic knocks over Tiz the Law *and* Baffert



Authentic thrilled the ...empty stands

Churchill Downs/Coady Photography

There was more than \$10 million bet to win on Tiz the Law in the 146th Kentucky Derby, the first ever to be run in September and the first to be run with no crowd. Tiz the Law, impressive winner of the Travers Stakes

earlier in the summer, went off at 3-5, but it was Authentic who fought for the lead from the furthest most outside pole. Authentic had to work hard to lead the field into the first turn – the opening quarter was timed in :22.92 and

the half went in :46.41. As Authentic and jockey John Velazquez galloped towards the far turn, Tiz the Law and Manny Franco had progressed into second and it was clearly a battle between the two. At the top of the stretch, after 6 furlongs in a swift 1:10.23 and the mile in 1:35.02, Tiz the Law loomed on the outside of Authentic and briefly appeared to put his head in front.

At that point, Authentic illustrated what a champion does. He repelled Tiz the Law and in the final eighth of a mile, inched gradually away to win by 1/4 lengths. The mile and a quarter was timed in 2:00.61, the seventh fastest Derby and the quickest since Monarchos went 1:59.97 in 2001.

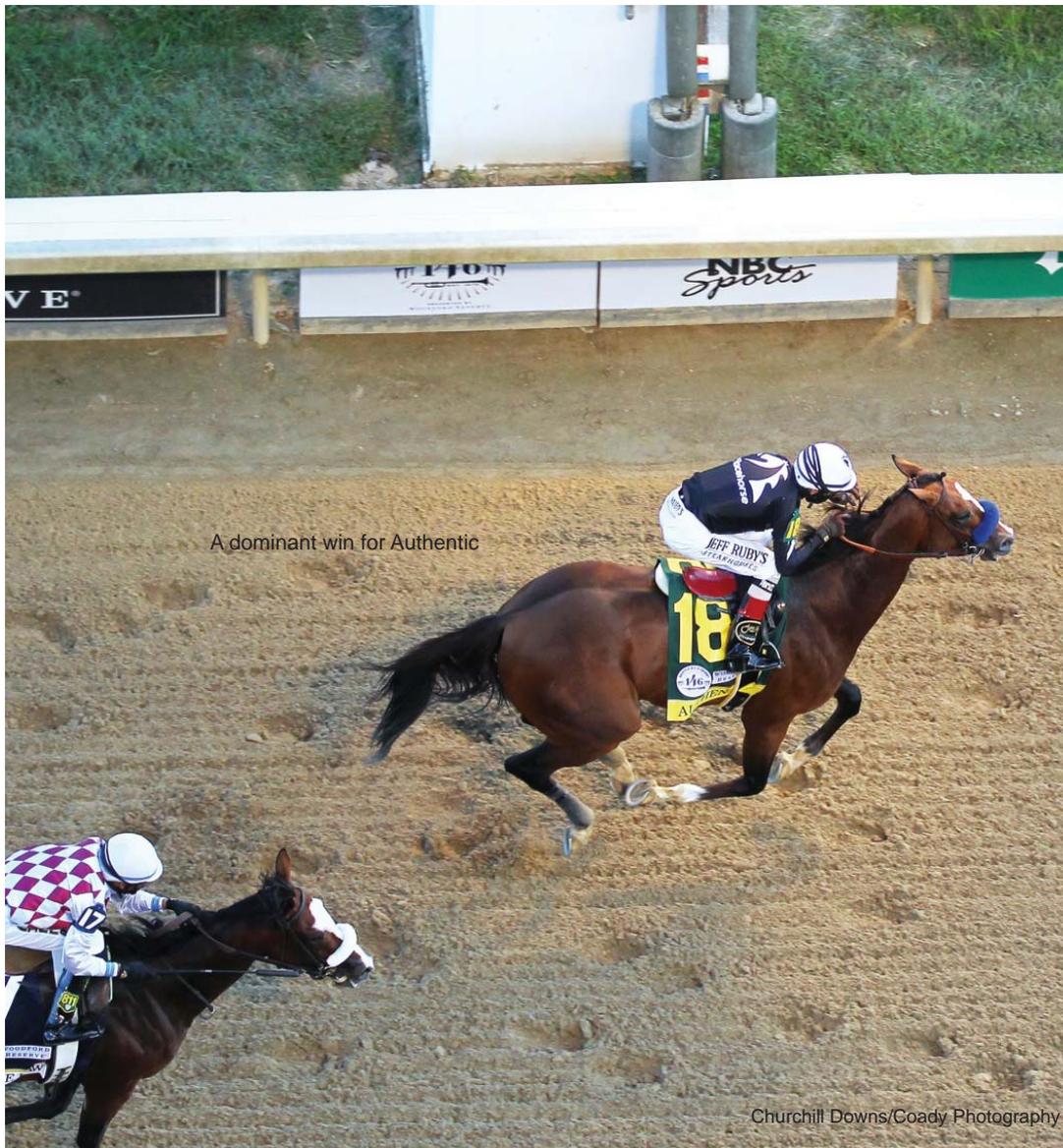
This was a record tying sixth Derby for trainer Bob Baffert. The only other trainer to send out six Kentucky Derby winners is the legendary Ben Jones. Baffert's other champions are War Emblem (2002) Silver Charm (1997), Real Quiet (1998), American Pharoah (2015) and Justify (2018). This was John Velazquez 200th Grade I victory and Baffert gave the jockey all the credit for the win.

"I've had some great Derby rides, but what that guy did," said Baffert. "Johnny V. gave them the most incredible ride. The training was lights-out. He was fresh. He's a good horse. He's our number one pick from the beginning, and here we are. The greatest race in the world, and I feel very blessed and fortunate."

Jack Knowlton, part of the Sackatoga Stable that owns Tiz the Law, was gracious in defeat.

"Bob, he's got the magic touch," said Knowlton. "He had this horse ready at the right time and he beat us. Tiz has been able to pass horses all year and today he ran into one he couldn't get by. Credit Authentic. He came from the far outside and managed to get to the lead and just ran a great race. No shame on our part. Hopefully, we'll get some more shots at him and we'll turn the table on him."

After the race, Authentic apparently wasn't finished topling over legends. When they attempted to adorn him with the traditional garland of roses, there was a length of ribbon that entangled in Authentic's legs, causing him to spook. He reared around violently and, in the process, barreled into several people in the winners circle.



A dominant win for Authentic

Churchill Downs/Coady Photography



Churchill Downs/Coady Photography

Bystanders were knocked down like bowling pins and one of the fallen was Baffert who went tumbling to the grass.

“He spun around, and he was like a bowling ball. He just spun us all around,” Baffert said. “The turf course is pretty soft here, so it wasn’t too bad. I was probably more embarrassed than anything when I hit the ground.”

Baffert was not injured, but another member of his crew was not so lucky. Another Baffert entry in the Derby, Thousand Words, reared and flipped in the paddock and, in doing so, caused assistant trainer Jimmy Barnes to break an arm. Barnes had to be rushed to the hospital and missed the live running.

As for Authentic – maybe everyone got too hyped up on Tiz the Law and ignored Authentic’s terrific record. He had lost just one of his 5 previous races; a second in the Santa Anita Derby when he finished almost 3 lengths behind Honor A. P. Authentic came into the Derby off a nose win in the Haskell Stakes at Saratoga. Authentic paid

\$18.80 in the Derby.

Velazquez, 48, picked up his third win in the Derby. He rode Animal Kingdom in 2011 and Always Dreaming in 2017.

“Bob, from the beginning, said, ‘I’ve got a good one for you. This is it,’” said a triumphant Velazquez in the winners circle.

It has been a year of extremes for Baffert. He had several Derby contenders, but one by one – except for Authentic, they all suffered calamities that prevented them from running. Earlier in the summer, Arrogate, winner of the 2016 Travers, the Breeders’ Cup Classic, and the 2017 Pegasus, had to be euthanized after a fall in his stall. Arrogate won a North American record \$17,422,600.

“It’s been a roller-coaster year but, thankfully, it’s the love of the horses that keeps me going,” said Baffert, his voice breaking. “They’re the best therapy a human can have. I love being around them.”

A very critical aspect of Authentic’s victory is that he is part owned by MyRaceHorse Stable, which offered fractional ownership. That means some 4,600 investors can all say they owned a Kentucky Derby winner. Included in the fractional ownership is Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher, Walker Beuhler, and former Olympic skier, Bode Miller. Each of them bought a share for \$206. Authentic is also owned by Spendthrift Farm.

This, of course, is the only time the Kentucky Derby has been run in September. It’s the only time it has been run after the Travers. And the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico is scheduled for Saturday October 3.

Wagering from all sources on the Derby was \$79.4 million, compared with \$165.5 million on last year’s race. Churchill Downs officials attributed the decline to the absence of on-track wagering, less than a full field of 20 horses in the race, and Tiz the Law being a prohibitive favourite.



Bob Baffert (left, blue jacket) got hip checked

Mohawk Stakes

August 13



Trina and Robert Shepherd were 31-1

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There was a pair of \$108,000 OSS Gold races, both for three year-old trotters, and both produced surprising payoffs. In the first one, Trina, driven by Robert Shepherd overcame the disadvantage of starting in post 10 in the second tier. Trina was able to get away fourth as the 4-5 favourite, GP Dreamin (Jody Jamieson), carved out fractions of :26.3, :55.3 and 1:24.3. In the stretch, after a very comfortable trip, Trina tipped out three-wide and simply gobbled up the front-runners, finding the wire 3 lengths the best in 1:53.4. Trina is trained by Blake McIntosh and owned by Sean Klemencic, 30 Plus Stable, and Blake McIntosh and apparently the bettors were discouraged by her disappointing fourth place finish the week before as the 3-5 favourite. She paid \$64.20 to win.

The second OSS Gold that night went as the eleventh race and Wine Rack Hanover (Sylvain Filion) was installed as the 7-5 choice, but that one trotted as if it had been into the wine rack earlier in the day, finishing a lacklustre eighth. Louis Philippe Roy worked out a perfect pocket trip for Royalty Deal. Talahasse Seelster, at 45-1, was allowed to trot all alone on the front end and she created splits of :27.4, :56, and 1:24.4. As the field turned for home, Roy pulled Royalty Deal off the rail and grabbed the lead with about 100 yards to go, winning by a neck over a late charging Magic Cape in 1:53.4. Clark Beelby is the trainer for the owner, Coyote Wind Farms. With her second win in 8 starts, Royalty Deal paid \$27.80.

August 20



Fashion Frenzie, but barely!

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On August 20, there were two \$106,400 OSS Gold races, both for two year-old trotters, and both were won by heavy favourites who remained undefeated.

Fashion Frenzie and driver Dustin Jones went off at 2-5 in the first division and, after opening up 3 lengths in mid-stretch, had to hold on by a neck over a late moving Full On Muscles and Trevor Henry. Time for the mile was 1:55.2 and it meant Fashion Frenzie was 4 for 4 in his

career. He is trained by Jones for interests in Quebec and he paid just \$2.80.

That \$2.80 payoff probably looked good to those who pounded Macho Martini down to the minimum .05 in the second OSS Gold. Driven by Bob McClure, Macho Martini got to the front easily in :29.2, and that was a huge benefit as four others broke stride behind him. Macho Martini cruised to an easy 2 length win in 1:55.4 and he is now 5 for 5 for trainer Luc Blais and owner Determination of Montreal.

August 27

On this Thursday, there were 4 divisions of the Champlain Stakes, all for two year-old trotters. The first one was for colts and geldings with a purse of \$93,759, and it was Lucky Rascal trotting home in 1:56.3 for Sylvain Filion. Lucky Rascal is trained by Ben Baillargeon for Vena Santo and Vena Nunzio and he paid \$10.10. This was actually Lucky Rascal's first career win in his fourth try.

From that point on, it was the Bob McClure-Luc Blais-Determination show as that trio swept the next three Stakes. The rookie fillies trotted for \$86,665 and



Sonna Soprano sang a winning tune

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all the bettors seemed certain that Donna Soprano would be singing the aria after a mile. Donna Soprano was pounded down to .15 on the dollar and she hit all the right notes, rallying from fifth at the three quarters to win by a comfortable length in 1:55.2. McClure drove, Blais trained, and Determination owned. The filly is now 3 for 3 and the win ticket was a miniscule \$2.30.

Two races later, the Champlain Stakes for fillies was worth \$85,664 and, once again, it was McClure delivering



Dicentra was the best

New Image Media Photo

a heavy favourite. Dicentra trotted to the front in a relaxed 29 seconds for the first quarter and no one was able to pass her as she scored by a widening length in 1:57.2. That's 3 wins in 6 starts for Dicentra who produced a \$2.60 win ticket.

And the final Champlain division that night looked a lot like the previous two as McClure was behind the awesome Macho Martini who appeared to expend very little energy



Macho Martini is 5 for 5

New Image Media Photo

in an easy one-length win in 1:55.3. Macho Martini ran his record to a perfect 6 for 6 for Blais and Determination who got the lion's share of the \$93,760 purse, while the winning bettors received just \$2.40 for the win.

August 28

Three year-old fillies trotted for big cash in two divisions of the Casual Breeze Stakes. The first one was



Nothing Casual about Sorella!

New Image Media Photo

worth \$81,405. I'm not sure if harness racing owner/promoter Adriano Sorella can run a mile in 1:51.3, but on this Friday night, his name sake shook things up. Sorella, driven by Yannick Gingras, got the lead by the half, trotted the last half mile in :55.4, with an emphatic final quarter of :27.2 to win by 9 lengths. And that time - 1:51.3 - was the fastest mile ever trotted in Canada or at Mohawk. Sorella has won 5 of 7 this year, including the Hambletonian Oaks and she has earned in excess of \$400,000 this year. She is trained by Nancy Takter and owned by Elmer Fannin, Crawford Farms Racing, and Brent Fannin. Bettors had to be satisfied with a \$2.20 win payoff.

The second Casual Breeze went to Mckees Angel, driven by Sylvain Filion. Mckees Angel surged from fifth to first in the second quarter and repelled all



A Breeze for Mckees Angel

New Image Media Photo

challengers to the wire, winning by a length in 1:54.2. The owners, Legendary Standardbred Farm, are probably grateful their filly was in this heat; the time would have had Mckeels Angel about 15 lengths behind Sorella. Mckeels Angel, winning for the third time in 15 tries, is trained by Ben Baillargeon and created a \$10.20 payoff.

September 11

There were three divisions of the Simcoe Stakes for three year-old trotters. In the first one, for fillies, which had a purse of \$88,895, Fortune Starlet with Roger Mayo-tte was installed as the 8-5 favourite, but that one broke stride before the start and lost all chance of contending.



Warrawee Vicky at 7-1

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Warrawee Vicky, driven by Doug McNair, got a much smoother trip. She sat second for most of the mile behind Whos Blues (Bob McClure) and, in the stretch, pulled out and persevered to the wire to win by a head over She Rocks Kemp (Trevor Henry) in 1:54. This was the second win in 5 starts in 2020 and the seventh in 15 tries for Warrawee Vicky who is owned by Brad Grant and trained by Scot McEneny. The win ticket was \$16.70.

The second division of the Simcoe Stakes was worth \$167,511 and featured three year-old colt trotters. The favourite, Capricornus (Doug McNair), went off at 9-5, led to the half in :56, then came to a disappointing halt to finish last of seven. Jula Trix Treasure, steered by Yannick Gingras, moved first-over out of fifth down the backstretch, took the lead before the field turned for home,



Jula played some Trix on her rivals

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and he was able to sustain his momentum for a 1:53.4 victory by a half-length over Threefiftytwo (Bob McClure). That's 3 wins in 9 races for this colt who is owned by Johanna Beaver, Judith Wolkimir, Michael Carter, and Mary McLoughlin. The winning trainer is Ake Svanstead and the perceptive bettors cashed \$8.20 for their \$2 win tickets.

The third division, worth \$88,894, seemed like a gift



A romp for Ramona

to Hambletonian champion, Ramona Hill, and the race turned out to be exactly that. With Andrew McCarthy along for the ride, Ramona Hill had the lead by the half in :57 and, with a :56.3 second half, she stormed home unchallenged by 5 lengths in 1:53.2, fastest of the three divisions. Ramona Hill is 4 for 5 in 2020 and 10 for 12 in her career for trainer Tony Alagna and owners Brad Grant, Crawford Farms, Robert LeBlanc, and In The Gym Partners. If you held a win ticket, it was barely worth the energy to cash. Ramona Hill paid \$2.10.

Luc Blais had a very good night By Mark Mckelvie

On A Streak punched his ticket to the Mohawk Million with an upset on Saturday, September 12 in the \$535,000 William Wellwood Memorial for driver Scott Young, trainer Luc Blais, and owner Determination.

The Wellwood Memorial was hyped as the showdown between undefeated colts Macho Martini and Southwind Tyrion, but both saw their perfect records broken when Macho Martini's Blais stablemate, On A Streak, gamely dug in to hold off 'Tyrion' in a thrilling stretch drive.

"This is incredible, even a guy like me doesn't have a whole lot of words," said Young after the biggest win of his career. "I took a look over and saw Southwind Tyrion first up and Macho Martini following him, obviously, and I thought I could try and get a little distance in the last turn and my colt dug all the way down the lane and I still thought Southwind Tyrion was going to get me halfway down the lane, but he kept digging and we got it."

In the stretch, Southwind Tyrion confronted On A Streak and the rookies went to war. Macho Martini dipped to the inside and stayed with the top pair, finishing third by just over a length.

A son of Cantab Hall, On A Streak was a \$155,000 Harrisburg yearling purchase by Serge Godin's Determination. The Blais trainee entered the Wellwood Memorial with three runner-up finishes, a third, and a

fourth in five starts.

On A Streak paid \$32 to win.

By winning, On A Streak gets a free pass to the inaugural Mohawk Million on September 26. On A Streak is the first confirmed horse in the field. Godin's



Donna Soprano did the expected for Blais

Determination already owned a slot and will now have an opportunity to race two horses in the field.

Godin's second spot could be reserved for a special filly that dominated again on Saturday night.

Donna Soprano made a three-wide move up the backstretch, moving to the lead and never looked back for a dominating 1:53.3 victory in the \$335,000 Peaceful Way for the team of Bob McClure, Blais, and Determination.

"I've talked many times about her temperament and she's a little flighty, but I've also said she's getting better every week and she was perfect tonight," said McClure. "I moved her three-wide, she landed on the front and she

came right back to me and just coasted home. She's a very special filly and I'm just very lucky to drive her."

Donna Soprano trotted by three-quarters in 1:25.2 with slight pressure from Amazone Duharas before leaving her rivals far behind with a wrapped up :28.1 final-quarter to win by 4¼ lengths.

A \$190,000 Harrisburg yearling purchase, Donna Soprano adds another Peaceful Way trophy to her family's connection, joining her dam, Windsong Soprano, who



On A Streak was a surprise for trainer Luc Blais

New Image Media Photo

won the race in 2008.

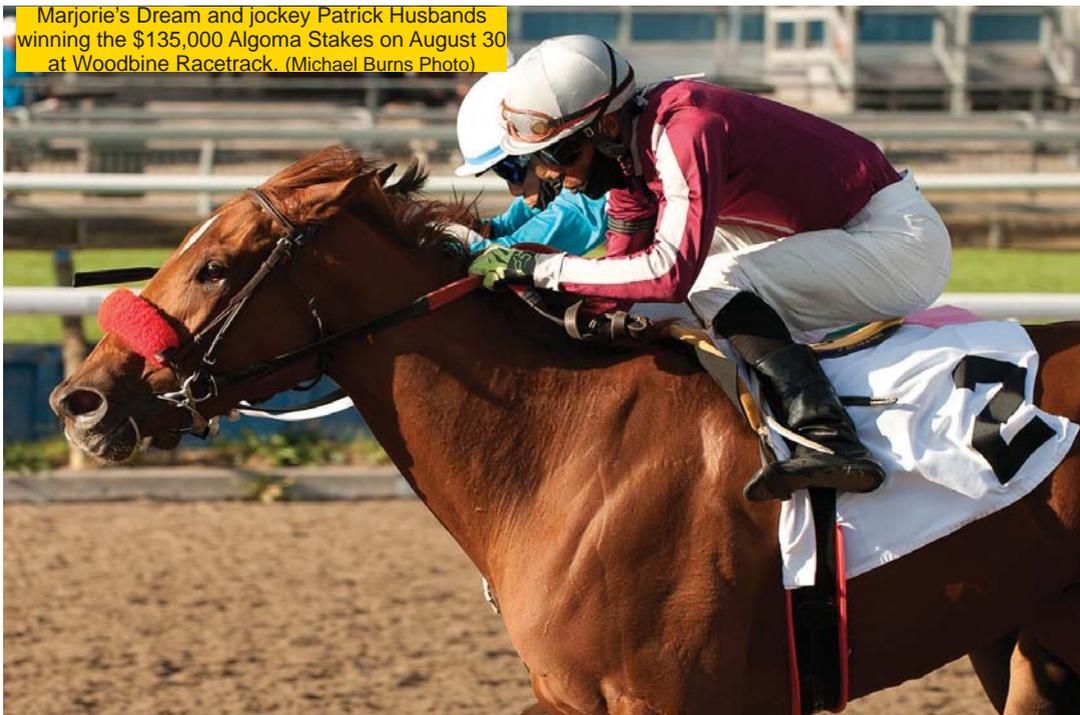
Owner Godin's Determination sits loaded with top two year-old trotting talent. Donna Soprano is now five for five with \$278,082 earned. The clocking of 1:53.3 is a new career-best and is the second fastest in event history behind Manchego's 1:52.4 mile in 2017.

Donna Soprano paid \$2.70 to win.

The trio, the filly, and a \$6,000 horse racing dream

By Chris Lomon/Woodbine

(This story first appeared on the Woodbine web site)



Marjorie's Dream and jockey Patrick Husbands winning the \$135,000 Algoma Stakes on August 30 at Woodbine Racetrack. (Michael Burns Photo)

Randy Thompson wasn't sure he would be able to get the words out when he dialed the number. But when he heard the voice on the other end of the phone, he calmly said, "I finally found the one."

He remembers the call as if it were yesterday.

Sitting in his car on the Woodbine backstretch, the trainer with the unmistakable Barbadian accent recalled the moment he realized the horse he always dreamed of having was in Barn 4 at the Toronto oval, home to the five thoroughbreds under his care.

"I've been here in Canada and at Woodbine for 20 years, since October of 2000," said Thompson. "I had always hoped to find a very special horse one day, a horse that would change my life. I knew Marjorie's Dream was the one. So, I called [champion jockey] Patrick Husbands, a fellow countryman, and I told him the day had come. And then I told him all about her."

How he came to train and co-own the powerful, yet agile, Ontario-bred chestnut is a story in itself, horse racing's version of a classic fairytale.

Chapter one began at the 2019 Canadian Premier Yearling Sale, the annual horse sale that takes place on the Woodbine grounds. The main characters are Thompson, his ex-wife Susan Thompson, and her boyfriend John McMullan.

The trio was looking for a thoroughbred to buy at the sales pavilion, one that came with a modest price tag and untapped potential.

"We bid all day, but we didn't get anything," recalled Randy. "We were frustrated. A filly came in the ring and she had a cut on her shoulder. The auctioneer said the horse would be sent back to the farm for 14 days, so that they could treat the cut, and we could get her. She is by Old Forester, who has the champion horse [Pink Lloyd] in Canada. I knew the cut would heal, so we bought the filly for \$2,000. We were excited. When she was at the farm, she developed swelling on her hind. It was a hematoma. We took her to a clinic, and they cleaned it out and flushed it. We sent her to another clinic and they also did a fantastic job."

Days later, Susan received a phone call from the breeder, Estelle Clunies, reaching out to thank them for buying the filly, now named Fourteen Days.

"Fourteen Days, she's a fighter," said Susan. "We named her after the pandemic, a mark in history none of us will ever forget."

Clunies also had a question.

"She wanted to let us know they also have the sister available for sale, a two year-old horse called Marjorie's Dream," said Randy. "She sent a picture to us. She was this big, tall horse. I thought, 'Wow... she's beautiful.' I asked how much they wanted and she told me it was \$6,000."

The three mulled the offer over, and figured it might be worth the risk.

They liked what they saw in the picture and quickly realized this horse would be further along than her sibling.

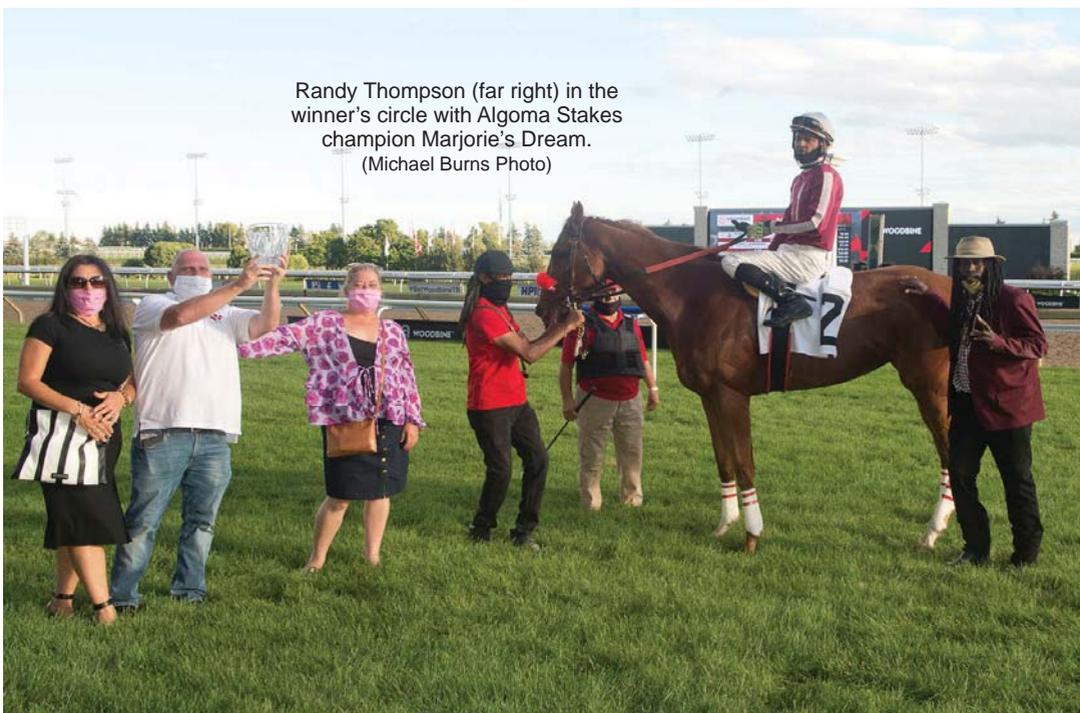
"We ended up making enough money to buy Marjorie's Dream," recalled Randy. "We were hoping and praying that Woodbine would open on time in the spring so that we could keep her in a stall there. I have to say a big thank you to Woodbine Racetrack for taking care of us through the pandemic. And then when Ontario Racing funded us with \$1,500 [Ontario purse funds from races cancelled in April and May due to COVID-19 restrictions were redistributed to owners of thoroughbreds, standardbreds and quarter horses in the form of a monthly stipend] for the horses, it was really great. That helped us pick up our feet and carry us through."

"We truly feel blessed," added Susan. "Randy, John, and I worked very hard throughout the winter to get Marjorie ready for her racing career."

Little did they know the thrill ride they were about to embark on with the daughter of Old Forester, sire of multiple Stakes champion and 2017 Canadian Horse of the Year, Pink Lloyd.

Not that the journey would be bereft of drama. Initial elation at the prospect of owning a young horse with upside was tempered by a series of misfortunes.

Jeffrey Alderson, who worked Marjorie's Dream early on, was injured in a morning training accident, which sent the jockey to the sidelines for an extended period time.



Randy Thompson (far right) in the winner's circle with Algoma Stakes champion Marjorie's Dream. (Michael Burns Photo)

Randy Thompson with Marjorie's Dream



Randy, desperate to pair Canada's eight-time top rider Husbands with the horse, was left wondering if it would ever happen.

"I had to stay on with the program for the horse. But I still couldn't get Patrick, so I turned to another rider, Daisuke Fukumoto. He came and breezed the horse. She ran her first race with Daisuke. We needed to get her going. She ran the farthest of any horse in the race and was fifth, but she was closing. After that, Fukumoto's agent told me he couldn't make a long-term commitment because he was riding for a trainer with a bigger outfit. One day, Patrick was supposed to come and work her, and it didn't work out again."

Disappointed, he devised another game plan to get Husbands in the irons.

"I decided to name Patrick on the horse. I was going into the race, but Patrick didn't get to breeze her. He kept her close to the rail in their first race together and, at the top of the lane, she took off with him again. She finished second, but Patrick and I knew there were other races to come for her."

That list included the \$135,000 Algoma Stakes on August 30 at Woodbine.

Randy had the race, a 7 furlong main track race for three-year-old fillies foaled in Canada, circled in his calendar for some time.

Husbands worked Marjorie's Dream in preparation for a spot in the Algoma starting gate.

"Patrick told me that was the work that he wanted," said Randy. "She waited until he told her to go, and she did. At

the top of the lane, when he asked her, she kicked home. He put me on eggshells after that. I got so weak. I had trouble going to bed. I was shaky. I wasn't dreaming of winning... I was dreaming about disappointing the public. I knew people would bet her, and I didn't want them to be let down. It was pressure. I've had horses scratched at the gate, lost when I thought we would win. When the Queen came to Woodbine in 2010, I went to Fort Erie with a horse. The horse was scratched and I didn't get to see the Queen. And now, I have a horse who is the favourite for a six-figure race. I was feeling light. I came down to the barn Saturday night around nine to look at her before the race on Sunday. I wanted to see her, just to make sure she was okay. I was feeling very nervous. I knew a lot of people, whether they were betting or not, wanted to see her win."

A conversation on the morning of the race with Allyson Walker, assistant to dual Hall of Fame trainer Roger Attfield, helped ease Randy's nerves.

At least it did temporarily.

"Ally asked me if I was nervous, and I told her I was. She told me that everything was going to be fine. I can't remember exactly what she said, but I came down a bit after we talked. I felt a little less nervous."

Walker was happy to be a calming influence.

"Randy is awesome," said Walker. "We might be a big barn, but like to have a small barn, 'family' atmosphere. Randy has been stabled in our barn since spring and has been a great addition. We all cheer for one another. And everyone celebrates each other's wins in Barn 4. We are

all there seven days a week trying to make the best lives for our horses and ourselves. We all know she is a spirited filly, so coming up to a race can be a lively endeavour. I asked him if he was excited and he said, 'No... I'm really nervous.' I think all I said was, 'Don't be! I promise to worry enough for you and you be excited and focus on the race.' We spoke a little about the pressures of it all and her tricks. He laughed and thanked me."

In the minutes before the eight-horse field was sent on its way in the Algoma, the jitters returned. And they certainly didn't abate when Marjorie's Dream, the slight 9-5 race favourite, was engaged by a hard-charging rival in deep stretch, a duel that culminated in a photo finish.

A nose was all that separated the pair, with Marjorie's Dream holding on for the win.

Husbands, donning the maroon and silver silks (an homage to the colours of Coleridge & Parry, Randy's secondary school) with an emblem of a fork and knife that acknowledge Thompson's mother – who has her own food business, Vern's Cuisine – delivered the trainer his first Stakes crown, and an \$82,935 payday.

"It's amazing; it feels really good," said Randy, who watched Marjorie's Dream win her second race from four starts. "First of all, I want to thank my good friend Peter Brown for finding me in Barbados and getting me a job in Canada 20 years ago. He let me work for [trainers] Mr. Tino Attard and Kevin Attard – I really appreciate those guys. And most of all, my mom, she allowed me to come. As you see, my colours are well representative of my mom's food business."

He wasn't only thinking of his mother.

"The breeder named the horse after her Aunt Marjorie," noted Randy. "On her tombstone is a picture of a racehorse wearing a shadow roll [the same equipment Marjorie's Dream wears]. She sent a picture to me the week before the race. She told me her aunt loved horses and loved being around her. So, it was a blessing to be able to win for her too."

His neighbours in Barn 4 were ecstatic.

"After she won, Randy thanked me again for easing his mind and taking the worry on," said Walker. "I had spoken to Roger on the phone before saddling his horse, Grazely, in the following race, and he had been watching Randy's horse and was thrilled he won. Support system is everything."

For the horseman from Browne's Gap, in Christ Church, Barbados, it was a moment he had always envisioned, long before he came to Canada.

"Growing up, I wanted to be a rider, but I was in a few accidents in Barbados. So, I decided to come to Canada to find work as a groom or a galloper. When I got to Woodbine, I often thought about winning a big race. Each year I was there, I thought more and more about winning that big race."

Now in his eighth year training thoroughbreds, he never wavered in his belief that he would one day make a life-changing call.

Thinking of the day it finally happened brings out a big smile.

"I said that when I find that perfect horse, I have to call my countryman. I'm going to call Patrick. He's a top rider, and I wasn't going to call him to ride just any horse. It had to be *the* horse. And Marjorie's Dream, she was that one."

He has another top-of-mind hope: seeing more Bajan and Black trainers in the sport.

"If you are willing to work hard, believe in yourself, and have a dream to chase, anything is possible."

Woodbine Stakes

August 15



Theodora B. had her 'A' game

Michael Burns Photo

It was sunny Saturday with four Stakes races. It began with the \$210,000 Dance Smartly Stakes in which six fillies and mares went 1/4 miles on the E. P. Taylor Turf. The five year-old Theodora B. went off at more than 11-1, but Justin Stein rode her as if she was 2-5, taking her right to the front when the gates opened. Allowed to lope along through relaxing fractions of :51.80, 1:16.24, and 1:39.49, Theodora B. came into the stretch leading Etoile (Rafael Hernandez) by a length and, with an impressive final quarter of just :22.87, Theodora B. was able to repel her one challenger, winning by three quarters of a length in 2:02.35. Owned by Augustin Stable and trained by Michael Dickinson, she won for the fifth time in 17 starts and paid \$24.10.

Next up was the Bold Venture Stakes, a race that, strangely, Pink Lloyd had never won before. He made up for it this time, though it wasn't all that easy. Rafael Hernandez had the sprint champion in fifth after a half in :45.69 as Malibu Secret (Patrick Husbands) and Roaring Forties (Justin Stein) traded punches on the front end. After the field of 7 came into the stretch, Pink Lloyd found a hole between rivals, and burst through for a small lead. At the wire, it was Pink Lloyd



Pink Lloyd (headline writer has run out of praise....)

Michael Burns Photo

by just a neck in 1:16.03 for the 6 1/2 furlongs.

"I don't want to be in the front," reported Hernandez. "That's why I tried keeping him outside, get him relaxed and settled down, and he did it. He settled down, sat behind the two horses that made the pace, and just waited to turn for home." This was trainer Bob Tiller's third victory in the Bold Venture. Incredibly, his first one came 43 years ago in 1977 with Pres de Tu.

"He's done everything, he keeps doing everything," said an elated Tiller. "He overcame a bad trip today for him -- he loves to run at horses, not be squeezed in between horses --

and he ran a big race, so we win again. It's the 22nd Stakes win, 25th win of his life. I'm in this game a long time and there will never be another horse like him. He really wasn't as sharp as he can get so when you combine 128 pounds -- when you go to put the weight on this horse in the paddock and that big lead weight pad gets on him -- you realize what kind of a horse this is. He's an icon. I just love him to death, I really do."

Usually 3-5 is nothing to get excited about, but a \$3.20 payoff on Pink Lloyd is as close to money in the bank as you can get. His owners, the Entourage Stable, got a cheque for \$90,000.

Only 6 horses competed in the 1 1/8th mile Plate Trial Stakes and Clayton, the 3-5 favourite, added more evidence that he's the real thing. Under Rafael Hernandez, Clayton



Clayton clocked 'em

Michael Burns Photo

stalked from third, took over the lead at the head of the stretch, and persevered to win by a half length over a determined Halo Again (Luis Contreras) in 1:50.61. That's three wins in four starts for Clayton who is trained by Kevin Attard for Donato Lanni and Daniel Plouffe. The correct bettors got just \$3.30.

The \$175,000 King Edward Stakes attracted 8 horses asked to go a mile on the turf. Mr Ritz, ridden by Patrick Husbands, was the lukewarm 2-1 favourite, but he couldn't hit the board. Rafael Hernandez put a punctuation mark on a brilliant day with a well-timed ride aboard March to the

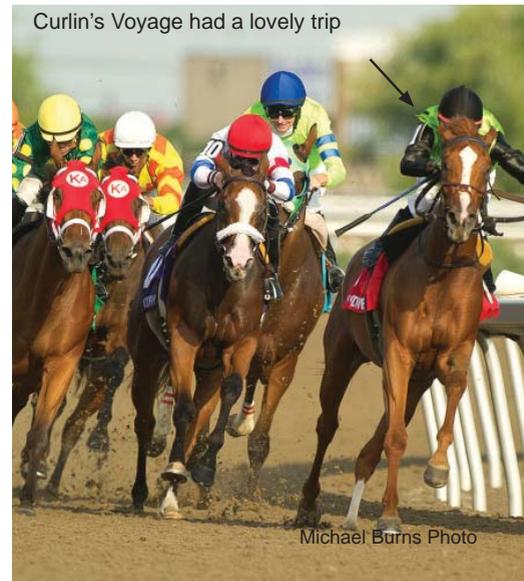


Marching to the winners circle

Michael Burns Photo

Arch. The pair was eighth at the quarter, seventh at the half, and still fifth as the field turned for home. With a powerful burst in the final eighth, March to the Arch marched to the winners circle, winning by 2 1/2 lengths in 1:32.28, just a half second off the course record (1:31.75) set by Wise Dan. That was Hernandez's fourth win of the afternoon. March to the Arch is trained by Mark Casse for Live Oak Plantation and the 5 year-old gelding paid \$9.60.

The feature race on a day full of added money events was the \$500,000 Woodbine Oaks. Curlin's Voyage carrying Patrick Husbands was bet down to 7-5 and she proved that to be a smart investment. Infinite Patience (Emma-Jayne Wilson) belied her name by taking the field to the quarter in :23.15, the half in :46.79, and the three quarters in 1:11.21. At that point, she was done as Curlin's Voyage, watching this all unwind from the back of the field, began her move forward. She came inside to take command at the head of the



Curlin's Voyage had a lovely trip

Michael Burns Photo

stretch and, with a strong final quarter of :23.13, discouraged all her followers, winning by 1 3/4 lengths over Terra Racing Stables' Afleet Katharine. Time for the 1 1/8 miles was 1:50.04, which should be noted is almost 3 lengths faster than Plate Trial winner Clayton recorded for his 9 furlongs.

"I told myself, 'I'm on the best horse,'" said Husbands. "So, when I reached the five-eighths pole, I was looking for any holes. The first hole that opened up, I was clear of that one, and then the second hole opened up by the three-eighths pole, and then at the quarter pole the other one opened up, and it was all sailing from there."

"She's a very special filly," added trainer Josie Carroll. "I think we knew what we had from the start when we were very bold and put her against the boys the first time out in a Stake. It's not something you do lightly; you have to think that one's special. I trained her fairly hard into this race and she just thrived on it. Good horses thrive on training."

In 2019, Josie was inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame. In 2011, she sent out Inglorious to win both the Oaks and the Queen's Plate. That happened 5 years after she became the first female trainer to win the Plate when Edenwold captured Canada's most famous horse race.

Curlin's Voyage has won 5 of her 9 races and has missed the board just once. She is owned by Hill 'n' Dale Equine and Windsor Boys Racing.

The win ticket was worth \$4.70.

The \$100,800 Eternal Search Stakes at a mile and a sixteenth on the inner turf attracted 8 runners on August 22, and while the favourite Bramble Queen suffered near disaster, Court Return, ridden by Daisuke Fukumoto, rallied from last to win by 1 1/4 lengths.

Desdemona (Simon Husbands) led the field for the first



Court Return aced them

Michael Burns Photo

6 furlongs as Court Return was running comfortably at the back. As the field went around the far turn, Luis Contreras took Bramble Queen four-wide at which point she apparently took a bad step, causing her to fall as Contreras was catapulted to the turf. Neither horse nor jockey was injured.

Meanwhile up front, Kazushi Kimura on Gun Society was leading and, down to the wire, his countryman, Fukumoto, had more horse as Court Return got up to win in 1:43.66, more than two seconds off the course record (1:41.28) she had set on July 2.

Court Return is trained by Josie Carroll for Ivan Dalos. She now has two straight wins after failing to prevail in her first 8 races.

"It appears to be a family that develops late," said Carroll. "Mr. Dalos realizes that, and we've said all along that we just have to be patient and this filly will come."

Court Return paid \$10.80 to win.

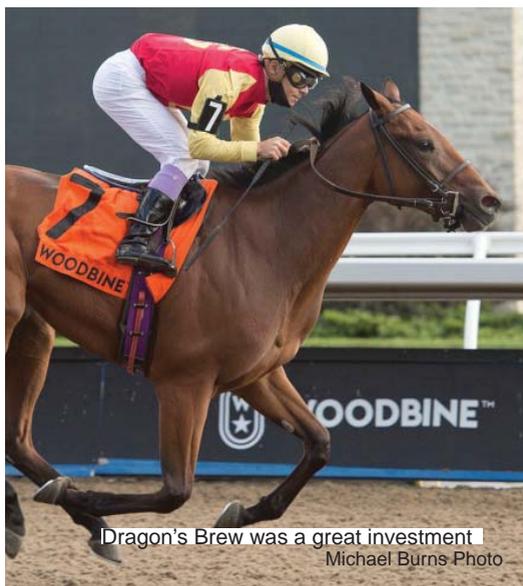


August 23

Gretzky scored again!

Michael Burns Photo

The \$100,000 Soaring Free Stakes asked 5 two year-olds to go 6½ furlongs on the inner turf, and though the great Wayne Gretzky has long been retired, the rookie colt Gretzky the Great appears intent on emulating the superiority of his namesake. Ridden by Kazushi Kimura, Gretzky the Great stalked the leader, Into the Sunrise (Justin Stein), until deep stretch when he surged by very late to win by a neck in 1:13.83. It was the second win in three starts for Gretzky the Great. He is trained by Mark Casse for Gary Barber and Eclipse Thoroughbreds, all of whom are big hockey fans.



Dragon's Brew was a great investment

Michael Burns Photo

August 30

In advance of the annual Yearling Sale on September 2, there were four Stakes events on August 30 that rewarded people who had made investments in horses a few years earlier. All four races were restricted to horses that had been purchased in the Canadian sale.

Dragon's Brew cost Goldmart Farm just \$3,000 at last year's Yearling Sale and when that gelded son of Milwaukee Brew powered home by 2½ lengths in the \$250,000 Simcoe Stakes at 6½ furlongs, he earned \$150,000. Daisuke Fukumoto rallied Dragon's Brew from fifth at the half with a three-wide move at the head of the stretch and they were much the best down the lane. Time for the distance was 1:17.90. Dragon's Brew is trained by Robert Tiller and he paid \$8.10.

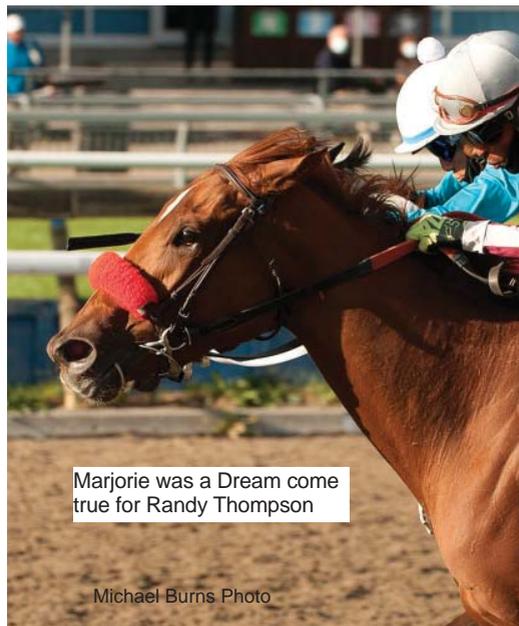


El Bayern nearly broke the tote board

Michael Burns Photo

Two year-old fillies raced for \$250,000 in the Muskoka Stakes at 6½ furlongs and El Bayern at 23-1 was the second longest shot in the field. Ridden by Sheena Ryan, El Bayern was tenth and last at the half, but erupted around the far turn, came into the stretch five-wide, and fired home to win by a length in 1:18.91. This filly was an \$8,000 purchase last year for Stacey Van Camp. She is trained by Michael Mattine and she paid \$48 to win.

The 7 furlong Algoma Stakes had a purse of \$138,225 and Marjorie's Dream almost turned her lead into a



Marjorie was a Dream come true for Randy Thompson

Michael Burns Photo

nightmare. The two year-old daughter of Old Forrester was ahead by almost 2 lengths late in the stretch and just barely held off a late-charging Silent Causeway. Marjorie's Dream was ridden by Patrick Husbands and was timed in

1:23.26. Trainer Randy Thompson is co-owner with John McMullan. Those two gentlemen purchased Marjorie's Dream for \$6,000. Now she has earned \$103,032. She paid \$5.60 to win.

The Elgin Stakes, with a purse of \$135,000, went to Told It All who, despite entering the race off two consecutive wins, went off at more than 9-1 under Luis Contreras. Told



Not many were told at all about Told It All

Michael Burns Photo

It All watched the speed unfold from third early in this 7 furlong dash, was moving past rivals into the stretch, and simply pulled away for a 2½ length win in 1:23.25. Told It All was purchased at the Yearling Sale for \$20,000 by Robert Hardie, but was subsequently claimed for \$25,000 in July by Rainbow Stables and trainer Norm McKnight. That was a very smart claim – the winners purse from the Elgin was \$84,636. Told It All produced a \$20.60 win ticket.



Alda got up in the last jump

Michael Burns Photo

The finish of the \$100,000 Catch a Glimpse for two year-old fillies needed much more than a glimpse at the wire. At the finish of 6½ furlongs on the inner turf, it appeared to the naked eye that the 4-5 favourite, Dreaming of Drew (Rafael Hernandez), has successfully repelled a late-moving Alda. In fact, race caller Robert Geller, who is rarely fooled, called Dreaming of Drew as the winner. But on the replay, you can see that, at the very last instant, Alda bobs his nose at the wire just as the head of Dreaming of Drew lifts up. A scant nose the difference. Steven Bahen was the winning jockey for trainer Graham Motion, who sent Alda out for Wertheimer and Frere. Alda won for the second time in three tries and paid \$7.30.

Thoroughbred
Owner of
the Month:
Jordan
Lay



WOODBINE

presented by WEG

For as long as he can remember, there were always horses in Jordy Lay's life.

"My father, Clarry, took me to track when I was just a baby," says Lay. "At Woodbine, my dad would hand me to the outrider, Gord Moses, in the paddock and Gord would ride me on the lead pony all the way up to the apron, and then he'd hand me back to my dad right there as the horses went out to the track."

The sport of horse racing has been a constant in Lay's vocabulary.

"As a baby, my first word was horse," he quips. "I raced my ponies when I was a kid against all my friends. I was a pony clubber. I learned to ride from David Clarke's mother, Joan, at the Tynedale Pony Club. I always just wanted to be racing. I did that until I was in my thirties."

Through several years of owning horses, Lay has produced modest results. However, on August 29, his four year-old filly Mrs. Del carried Skye Chernetz to an emphatic win by 3½ lengths in a maiden special weight at 5½ furlongs. The purse for that race was a very generous \$124,000 and Lay, as owner and trainer, earned \$73,290, by far the biggest cheque he has ever cashed from the races. This got even better because dad, Clarry, bred Mrs. Del.

"So, there's my father, sitting at home on the couch, making \$13,000," says Jordy. "That was the breeders' award. The purses are incredible for Ontario-sired and Ontario-breds who run in open allowance. We ran for \$5,000 less than Pink Lloyd did. It's an incredible program."

Lay makes a point that he wants Skye Chernetz on all of his horses. This is a little unusual, as Chernetz, who doesn't even have an agent, was twelfth or thirteenth in the jockeys standings at the time this paper was published. Lay considers her an unappreciated gem.

"I think Skye's the most underrated rider at Woodbine," he says. "I've never seen her make a mistake out on the race track. She's very smart, very strong. She makes incredible in-race decisions. And what I mean by that is, as the race is ongoing, she makes the right decision. I've never given her riding instructions."

A great example of Skye timing it perfectly came last December when she rode Rewrote, a horse trained by Lay and owned by Donald Brown. Rewrote, a four year-old filly went off at 5-1 in a field of 10 \$10,000 claiming maidens. Rewrote was tenth at the half, but Chernetz rallied her to win by a widening length at the end of the mile and a sixteenth.

"That one was really rewarding because that filly is owned by a friend of mine from Florida, Don Brown, and he just loves her," says Lay. "And Skye did all the work for us; she



Jordan Lay (exercise rider, Ashley Edwards on Mrs. Del in background)

was there every morning for the workouts. Our plan was to go for the lead, but she got left at the gate. But again, Skye played the hand that was dealt to her and made that really impressive run on the far turn and came on and won. I couldn't have been happier. I can't say enough good things about Skye. She is a profoundly decent person; I'm proud to call her a friend."

We may have buried the lead in this story. Not only is Jordan Lay a trainer/owner at Woodbine, but he has a full-time job as a floor director with City Television. That makes for a very long, but fulfilling day.

"I'm up just after 2 in the morning," says Lay. "I get to Woodbine by 3, then I ride my first horse. Then I ride my second horse. After that, I go downtown to the studio. The show starts at 6, so I get there by 5:30."

Lay has been with City Television for over 30 years. He counts among his close friends, the hosts of Breakfast Television.

"Dina Pugliese, Devo Brown, Melanie Ng," he starts rhyming off. "Stephanie Henry and Frankie Flowers."

And Lay sees a similarity between training horses and controlling all the high-priced talent.

"My job is to make sure everything's in place," he says. "That all the people are there. To coordinate the audio and video. It's kind of like being a trainer. I just need to make sure everybody's where they need to be and doing what they're supposed to be doing."

Jordan Lay has actually pieced together a pretty good deal for himself. By training and riding his own horses, he keeps his racetrack expenses down. And with a more traditional full-time job, Lay has wrapped himself in a security blanket.

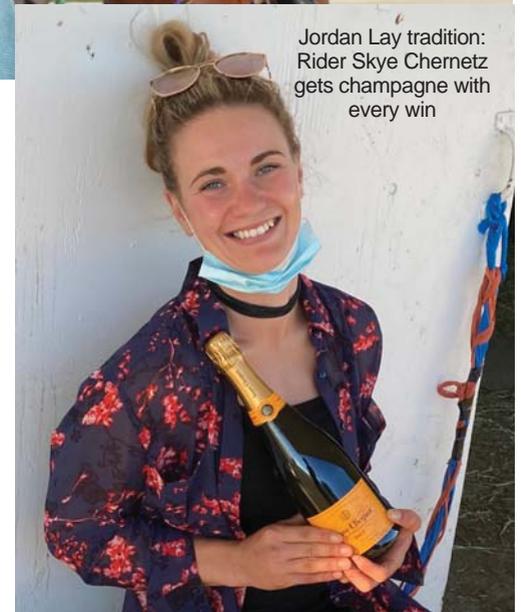
"It gives me peace of mind," he says. "I don't have the pressure that perhaps some other trainers have because I do have the other job. And it also gets me away from the racetrack. There are times when maybe things aren't going well at the track. And I'm at work, and I'm having fun and hanging out with my friends there."

Lay isn't completely a one-man show. He does employ an exercise rider named Ashley Edwards.

"I can't say enough good things about her," he praises. "She's done all the work with Mrs. Del the last two or three months. They get along so well. She's really important to me."

Right now, Lay owns three horses – Mrs. Del, I Have Hope, and a new one named Donna Elegante.

"She's a filly I got from Team Valour out of Animal Kingdom out of a South American champion," he adds.



Jordan Lay tradition: Rider Skye Chernetz gets champagne with every win

With just 8 wins in his career, Lay admits he's at the opposite end of the spectrum from Stronach Stables, Ivan Dalos, or Colebrook Farms. But he likes his small player status.

"The bigger barns start with the better horses," he shrugs. "The better bred horses and the ones that show more promise. There's all levels to run at Woodbine and we got lucky with Mrs. Del. You are up against it. But I like it. I like being the underdog."

When your stable is winning hundreds of races a year, it might be easy to forget the odd victory, but Lay has a clear memory of the first horse that ever won for him.

"His name was Regal Disclosure," he reveals nobly. "It was in the summer at Fort Erie in 2006. The late Dean Deverell was the rider and he was about 25 lengths out of it. Those kinds of horses can get into all kinds of trouble, and they require a ton of pace. And it probably wasn't the best claim I ever made, but he was a fun horse to have around because he would just come flying after being a pole behind."

According to Equibase, Regal Disclosure ran 110 times and won 8 races. For that race on August 29, 2006, he paid \$39.40 to win.

Now in his 50s, Jordy Lay is approaching five decades of his love affair with horses.

"I just love the horses," he says. "I'd still be racing ponies in the fields if I could."

Lay pauses as if he has a secret to reveal.

"If you want to know the truth, I've always told Skye that my fantasy is that she doesn't show up for a ride and then I have to be the jockey."



Ken Middleton: Playing it cool



Galvin and co-owner trainer, owner, breeder yours truly.”

There was a small, poignant moment right after his filly won that Middleton had to acknowledge. In the winners circle, driver Filion was looking up to the announcer’s booth and gesturing with his arms.

“I said, ‘Très bien’,” admits Middleton. “Because he kept looking up and I couldn’t ignore him.”

Middleton used to date Stacey Reinsma and they actually bred Shes A Sassy Beach.

“It was the first year that Sunshine Beach was standing stud, and he was a very talented horse,” says Middleton. “And of course, he’s a son of Somebeachsomewhere. The Somebeachsomewhere colts were winning everything in the U.S. I thought that he would be an attractive stallion to go to. And I got a deal on the service fee.”

So, a son of Somebeachsomewhere got a date with Lady Marina, a broodmare now the property of Middleton and William Galvin.

Middleton has been the regular announcer at Mohawk since 2006, but he actually owned horses long before that.

“Back when I was in high school,” he recalls. “I started out with just parts of cheap claimers and I really got interested in it. And then I got away from it for a long time. It wasn’t until I was with Stacey; when we started dating, she had a horse named Hollywood Ham and it kind of got me back into the game. We ended up buying a yearling, and then we bought another yearling. Since then, we would buy a yearling every year. It’s just something I enjoy doing with my free time. I love getting up in the morning and interacting with the horses and it’s grown exponentially since then. I own a small hobby farm, and I’ve got three broodmares there and I’ve got two yearlings at the training center, so these days, I’m all in.”

The broodmare of Shes A Classy Beach was also raced by Middleton.

“The mother was bought out of a yearling sale when she was a baby,” he says. “We trained her and she won a Stakes race for us, and she made us some nice money.”

Lady Marina was a very worthwhile racehorse. In the late summer and fall of 2015, she finished third in each of her first 3 races, then came fifth, then cashed a cheque in 8 straight starts. In 2016, she raced 10 times, winning twice; her most impressive win came in the final of the \$38,600 Autumn Series, setting her career mark of 1:53.3 and earning Middleton and Galvin \$19,300.

“I was there the night the mare foaled Shes A Sassy Beach,” says Middleton, getting a tad more emotional than when he called the win. “I remember the day. I’ve got pictures on the phone of it when she was just soaking wet, coming right out of the mother. So, when the filly crossed

the finish line that night, I had a quick flashback, thinking to that night when she was born and thinking about when she was a year old.”

The calm, cool, collected race caller takes a pause to regain his composure.

“I guess it’s like being a parent,” he says. “When you’re proud of your kid and you see them score a goal in hockey and you flash back to the first day the kid had skates on.”

There may be other race callers who have had the rare thrill of calling their own horse winning, but what Middleton did almost certainly stands alone. He owned the broodmare, he bred the filly, he owned and trained her, and he called her coming from last to win.

About the training side...

“About three or four years ago, Stacey had the trainer’s license, and we just kind of worked together with the horses,” he says.

Middleton is reluctant to reveal details of a past relationship, except to say,

“I saw the writing on the wall, so then I got my own trainer’s license.”

Down The Stretch needed to know – what thrills Ken Middleton more – owning horses, training horses, or calling them?

“I don’t know if I could say one is greater than the other,” replied Middleton, whose job it is to distinguish the better horses from the lesser one. “They’re all fantastic. I love doing them all. My past-time is my interaction with the horses, whether I breed them or train them. It’s very satisfying as a breeder to have a horse win that you bred. It’s very satisfying to have a job like I do. It’s afforded me the luxury of being able to do all this financially and time-wise. Because I work at night, it gives me the opportunity to have the freedom in the day to choose to be a trainer and choose to be a breeder of horses. So, it’s all kind of intertwined with one another, and they’re all great.”

So, apparently, a triple dead heat for announcing, training, and owning.

“In all seriousness, all three of them are great. Not one of them is greater than the other.”

Middleton has that great perspective on the sport, describing harness races from his lofty peak several days a week. But he also gets to experience the thrill of sending out a horse to win.

“It’s great,” he says. “It doesn’t matter if you’re winning at Mohawk or London or Flamboro or Clinton on a Sunday. The only difference is the purse money. It’s a great feeling. It’s a big adrenaline rush when your horse races and wins as well.”

And the night Shes A Sassy Beach won, there was an abundance of feedback.

“My phone never stopped ringing for four hours,” he laughs. “Text messages, Facebook messages. You name it – Instagram, Twitter. People were genuinely happy for me and it makes you feel good because we all work hard. We put in a lot of hours to get the finished product and be in the winners circle. It’s a big financial investment and a big time investment.”

He’s the guy with the dream job and now he’s the guy with the winning pacer.

“I love it,” he says. “I can’t imagine my life without the horses. It’s such a great feeling.”

On Saturday, August 29 at Mohawk, veteran race caller Ken Middleton gave another professional call of the North America Cup, delivering the appropriate amount of excitement when Tall Dark Stranger paced away from rivals in the stretch. He made it dramatic and entertaining. But what would Middleton do if it was his own horse pulling away for victory in the stretch? Horseplayers found out in the first race at Mohawk on August 27. Middleton owns Shes A Sassy Beach, a two year-old filly who was pacing for the seventh time, still looking for her first win. At the half in this one, she was last, but trying to get into the race for driver Sylvain Filion. At the head of the stretch, Shes A Sassy Beach had momentum and was passing horses and, in mid-stretch, she got the lead, then opened up to win by more than a length.

Up in the broadcast booth, Ken Middleton had just seen his filly rally from last to win at odds of 9-2. But if you didn’t know he was the owner, you would never have suspected from his call. Middleton revealed nothing, maintaining perfect objectivity, even if he was exploding inside.

You have to wonder, did he consider going over the top, having some fun, blowing the roof off with a bombastic self-centered roar?

“No, not at all,” he answers and backs up his outward calm with an anecdote of another horse he owned. “Four or five years ago, I had a filly,” he starts. “She was in a Stakes race for \$105,000. She was 80-1 and got away eighth or ninth. Then she went four-wide around the final turn and she finished second. You would never in a million years know that I owned part of her. And she finished second. Going for \$100,000.”

As far as Middleton is concerned, leaving himself out of the equation is his way of respecting the job. To be sure, there is no rule in Ontario or even at Woodbine that says an announcer cannot own a horse, but Middleton wonders about the optics.

“We come under a certain amount of scrutiny from some people,” he says. “They might say, ‘Well, how can he be announcing the races and racing horses at the same time?’ So, I just kind of try and fly under the radar?”

As the horses parade before each race, the announcer is required to introduce each contestant, specifying the driver and the owner. Middleton even downplays his role during this protocol.

“I just say, ‘Here’s number 8, She’s A Sassy Beach, Sylvain Filion with the drive for co-owner breeder Bill

Ruth Barbour loves her Country Boy

Quarter Horse
Owner of
the Month:
Ruth
Barbour



When the wonderful Country Boy 123 swept to victory in a 110 yard sprint at Ajax Downs on August 12, the \$4,600 he earned for less than 7 seconds of work pushed his career earnings to \$389,467, vaulting him past One Kool Wave and making him the richest quarter horse in Canadian history.

"It was such a proud moment," says owner Ruth Barbour, "because that One Kool Wave was such an awesome quarter horse."

That win on August 12 was #24 for Country Boy 123 in his 37th start and to do it at the abbreviated distance of 110 yards is simply a testament to his amazing speed and determination to get to the front. One week later, he ran in a 220 yard race and, with regular jockey Ed Walton, erupted from the outside 9 post for another impressive win. The margin was three quarters of a length and the speed rating of 102 was especially sharp, considering that a northerly headwind had been suppressing times all afternoon.

Country Boy 123 actually prefers races that are longer, but Barbour felt that she had to enter him in these races, as her options were limited. In order for Country Boy 123 to run in the \$57,300 Alex Picov Maturity at 440 yards, a horse has to run three times in the same year at Ajax Downs.

"He's won the Picov Memorial Championship three years in a row," she says. "So, of course, I wanted to be able to go in it. But because the Open races haven't been going this year, I've never been able to get a race for him. That's why I had to go in these weird races at 110 then 220. I want you to know that I'm not doing this because I'm totally whacked out of my brain. Actually, I feel guilty, but the circumstances are dictating what I do."

That Country Boy 123 is a sensational success story is obvious. But when Barbour acquired this horse in 2014, she would have been dreaming in technicolour to imagine what would happen.

"I bought him at the Oklahoma Yearling Sale in 2014," she says. "I paid \$7,200."

"Country Boy was big, and did not look like a two-year-old winner and he wasn't going to win a million dollar futurity at two, that's for sure," she continues. "I looked at 200 horses and every horse I looked at went for 25, 35 and I'm like, 'Oh, no, we're not doing that. Not to just play in the backyard' and my husband was getting kind of pissed at me because we're just about to go leave on the plane and he says, 'Put the plow in a little deeper.'



Ruth Barbour and Country Boy 123

And then this guy comes along and he went cheap and I got him."

Barbour is a horse veterinarian and if she was going to own a horse, she wanted one that she could be very hands-on with. Her experience with thoroughbreds indicated that riding and training her own horse might be difficult, but the quarter horse sector is much more relaxed in that regard.

"I come from a show background originally, teaching kids to ride, that kind of stuff," she says. "I see some of my friends into quarter horses and they're riding their own horses at home, I was thinking, 'I just got a quarter horse. At least then I can play with it.'"

Barbour is in her mid 60s and still rides her horses. But getting on a high octane individual like Country Boy 123 can have unpleasant consequences.

"I kind of had a train wreck," she says, setting up the story of how Country Boy 123 tossed her. "I was riding him and my track is very close to the road and my road is a little too busy, and then a truck was coming along with those noisy brakes, and I know he's a little sound sensitive, then something happened. He hit me in the head and the next thing I remember is, *We're going awfully fast*. So I had to make a decision as we were coming up to the fence. Do I bail? Can I stop him, or should I just get off? I was like *I think I better bail*. So, I bailed, and it was the worst I have ever fallen off and I have fallen off once or twice before. It took me a long time to get over it, but I got over it. I never stopped riding, but it wasn't pretty."

Country Boy 123 is more than just a phenom in Canada. The Raceview Network, which covers horse racing in

Oklahoma, did a lovely seven minute story on him. This report was featured just before the \$59,000 Bradford Stakes at Indiana Grand. Barbour was a little concerned before the Bradford Stakes because the story on Country Boy 123 was widely seen and she was worried it might be a 'jinx'.

"Tony Cunningham is the guy who trains for me down there," she says, laughing. "He says, 'Everyone's showing me this story on your horse, so now I know I'm going to get her horse beat.'"

Cunningham didn't have to worry. There was a field of 10 and Country Boy 123, off as the second favourite, fired home first by a length in 19.892 seconds for the 400 yard distance.

Barbour emphasizes that she owns quarter horses not so much to make money, but for her own pleasure. The other runner she owns has the lovely name of Chicksdigmymoneybags and, under Regan Knowles, was actually fourth to Country Boy 123 in that race on August 19. Chicksdigmymoneybags is a pretty decent horse in his own right; he's a four year-old with 6 wins in 22 starts.

She may not be in it for the purses, but her horses are cashing cheques, which makes it the best of both worlds for Ruth Barbour.

"For me is the fact that I get to do most of it myself," she says. "So, when it goes really bad, it's like me and the horses, and when it goes really good, it's mostly the horses. It's just so exciting. I've loved horses since I was a little kid. It's just such a buzz to work with them. And I got two nice little horses right now, and it's just a lot of fun."

Worst call ever? By Garnet Barnsdale

(This originally was published on the Harness Racing Update site)



Harness racing social media was buzzing on and beyond August 23 following a disqualification in Race 11 at The Red Mile. It's being unanimously hailed as a terrible call by tweeters and Facebookers alike.

The \$3,400 maiden trot race was won by 1-5 favourite, Lindy's Stardust, who made a remarkable recovery after breaking just before the 3/4 pole when seemingly on her way to an easy win for driver David Miller. It appeared to all observers – except the judges – that the three year-old was correctly reined in by Miller as she lost ground continuously until she got back down trotting. Several observers noted she was slowed to almost a walk before getting back on stride, straightening out, at which point she was possibly 20 lengths behind. Incredibly, she then surged past the five fillies that had passed her to claim a 1 1/2-length victory.

Here's a sample of the outrage on social media:

Horseman Jay Hochstetler:

I've seen a lot of bad calls in harness racing but the DQ on David Miller in the 11th at Red Mile is by far the worst one in the history of horse racing.

HRU contributor Brett Sturman:

I just watched the replay myself. Not only did lose ground but slowed down to almost a complete stop.

DRF Harness Editor Derick Givner:

By the Judges definition of not losing ground, every

horse that breaks at Red Mile must be dq'd for failure to lose ground...not sure you could lose more ground than that horse.

Tweeter Steve Wing:

Before Dave got the horse going again, he was behind the horses that were racing, two others were miles back but they were still breaking. The DQ was the wrong decision, period!

Horseman John Kopas:

Might be the worst call I've ever seen.

Breeder/Owner Art Zubrod:

Worst call in the history of sports.

Horsewoman Ellie Sarama:

That has got to be one of the worst calls I've ever seen.....and they have a judges' license?? They better go back to judges' school. Wow.

Driver Yannick Gingras:

That's a horrible call, no doubt in my opinion.

I'm sure by now, you understand the theme. The big question has to be how the judges came up with the decision to disqualify the filly who clearly lost ground until she was back down trotting. On Monday, Red Mile presiding judge Tim Schmitz told harnessracing.com that the disqualification was an 'easy call'.

"When she made the break, she didn't lose ground quick enough," Schmitz said. "We timed it and she stayed alongside the other horse – B Lisa – for 8.3 seconds before she started to lose ground. She didn't lose any ground to the trailing horses."

This statement set off a new flurry of anger on social media.

Harness writer Ray Coto provided a clip of the part of the race where Lindy's Stardust broke stride with a stopwatch embedded in the tweet that appeared to clearly show that ground loss started well before 8.3 seconds of her traveling alongside her rival had elapsed.

Blogger Dean Towers' tweet included pictures of where Lindy's Stardust was positioned when she broke, and another that showed her in the middle of the track, about 8-10 lengths behind Lisa B when she was back down trotting and he added: "Here's the horse when she broke just before the 3/4's and here's where she is when she gets

back trotting. I am so amazed by this decision. Truly one for the ages."

Horseman Nick Boyd wasn't impressed with Schmitz's reasoning.

"Not shocking that guy is a judge," Boyd tweeted. "That is most certainly the worst answer he could have given."

Zubrod similarly wasn't buying it.

"She lost at least 5 lengths in those 8 seconds, and then 10 more lengths," he commented on his Facebook post.

Tweeter Mike Adams was blunter.

"It was an easy decision. LOL. That's why it took 10 min. to decide. That judge should be fired for gross incompetence. An awful decision and then trying to justify with more BS lies," he posted.

It was also noted that this race was the heaviest-bet race of the meet so far with more than \$85,000 put through the mutuels, which also attracted some commentary.

"Sad to know it was the best bet race," driver Tyler Sheen commented. "Many mad people I'm sure and they have a right to be."

Bob Bresnahan opined that the judges' decision would lead to lost business.

"You can kiss those fans goodbye," he posted.

Adding to the absurdity of the judges' call is where she was placed. Lindy's Stardust was placed sixth – thereby missing a check – behind a filly that was beaten 32 lengths and was in full retreat mode at the 3/4 pole where the break in stride occurred.

Here's the thing about disqualifications and horse racing and this one in particular. In almost every case – see last year's Breeders Crown DQ of Papi Rob Hanover, for example – the decision that is made by the judges is polarizing and you get some saying it was justified and often just as many arguing that it wasn't. This disqualification produced 100% solidarity of opinion in that every social media post and comment suggested that it was an egregiously bad decision.

So, can so many veteran horseman, journalists, bettors, and fans be so wrong, and the one judge be correct that this was an 'easy call'? Video evidence of the race would suggest only one guy got it wrong and it wasn't a tweeter.

The Canadian factors on a big day at the Meadowlands

When the incredible trotting filly Ramona Hill captured the 2020 Hambletonian on August 8 at the Meadowlands, Canadians took part in the celebrations. Ramona Hill is co-owned by Brad Grant of Milton who also owned a share of Atlanta who, in 2018, was previously the last filly to defeat the boys in the Hambo.

The first quarter of this year's version was trotted in :26.2, thanks to Amigo Volo (Dexter Dunn) who pulled that stunt off after starting in post 10. That was a brief moment of glory for Amigo Volo, as Andy McCarthy pulled Ramona Hill from her spot fourth on the rail to lead at the half in :54.3.

"When I came out early there, I sensed I could find the front," McCarthy said. "I went for it, and she knows her job."

Ready For Moni (Yannick Gingras), like Ramona Hill, a Hambletonian elimination winner the week before, took his chances first-over, giving cover to Back Of The Neck (Scott Zeron). Ramona Hill was still strong after three quarters in 1:22.2 and Ready For Moni's best effort could not make up any ground. With a final quarter in :27.4,

Ramona Hill was the winner by a length in a Stakes record-tying and lifetime best 1:50.1. Back Of The Neck was just back of the leaders in third.

"She was starting to work a little bit towards the wire, but she finished it off," said McCarthy after his fifth win of the day. "I was trying not to let it sink in too much because I still had a lot of work to do. The adrenaline you get from winning a race like this, words can't explain it. It's an amazing event and a privilege to be involved."

That was Ramona Hill's third win in four starts this year; she is 9 for 11 lifetime with earnings of more than \$1.15 million.

Ramona Hill (Muscle Hill - Lock Down Lindy) is trained by Tony Alagna for Brad Grant, Crawford Farms Racing, Robert Leblanc, and In The Gym Partners.

The Crawfords had a little extra reason to celebrate as they were the breeder of Ramona Hill and they also co-own Sorella, who powered to victory in the \$600,000 Hambletonian Oaks for driver Yannick Gingras.

"It's a little surreal; we haven't quite processed it and I don't think we'll process it for quite some time," said

Michelle Crawford after sweeping both the Oaks and the Hambletonian. "To have these two fillies in our lives, and to do the hard work...to get them to this point and then find out that they're good enough to go into these races and be competitive, it's unbelievable. It's a great feeling."

The bettors had to be satisfied with getting it right. Ramona Hill paid just \$2.80.

The Cane Pace is the first leg of the Triple Crown for pacers and it was the superb three year-old Tall Dark Stranger making another emphatic statement in this year's running. With Yannick Gingras steering, Tall Dark Stranger went around horses for the lead after a quarter in :26.2, then dared seven rivals to come and get him. None of them could – Tall Dark Stranger came into the stretch with a 2 length lead and widened to 3 at the wire in 1:47.1. And this one also has a Canadian angle - Marvin Katz is part owner...Tall Dark Stranger is trained by Nancy Takter, and is also owned by Crawford Farms, Caviart Farms, and Howard Taylor. That was his 11th win in 13 starts and his fifth straight sub 1:50 mile...which explains the \$2.60 win ticket.

4 Winners for Tony Phillips, 3 each for Bogar & Wood

By Jennifer Morrison

It was a fabulous Labour Day at Ajax Downs for jockey Tony 'TP' Phillips as the Etobicoke resident rode four winners on the eight-race card. Three of those wins were for owner James Bogar and trainer

*'Twas a dead heat Royal Hatrick and Ice Witch
That's what I always say, clickety click click
With a clickety click clock
With the sound of the horses' hooves when we all leave the block
With a wicked wick whack
And a wicked whack whack
Rat tat tat tat
And we all screaming that
That's how we get flat
Out here in Ajax*



DEAD HEAT! Ice Witch (5) and the filly Royal Hatrick (light blue) tied for the win in race 7 on Labour Day Monday at Ajax Downs
KATINA MILNS PHOTO

Barry Wood.

One of Phillips-Bogar-Wood's victories on a windy and cloudy afternoon came in a rare dead heat as their filly Royal Hatrick finished on even terms with Dan Giles' Ice Witch with jockey Josh Scott in race seven.

"I was busy battling with the favourite, the number 1 horse [Panther Cool], and finally got away from him near the finish," said Phillips. "Then I looked way over and saw Josh and Ice Witch and thought 'uh oh'."

Both Royal Hatrick, who was 11 to 1, and Ice Witch at 5 to 2, are Ontario-breds and were winning for the second time in 2020.

The day's featured race, the \$10,000 Gridiron Gallop, at 110-yards and the shortest race offered for quarter horses, was won by Steve Hunter's Zoxtobeyou, bred by Hunter in East Garafraxa and trained by his wife Janet Grice. The big six year-old had the best start in the seven-horse field under jockey Ismael Mosqueira and won by half a length in a time of 6.998 seconds for an impressive 92 speed index. It was the first win for the consistently good gelding since 2017.

"He really is the typical quarter horse," said Grice. "He's got the big butt on him. But for such a big horse he is very light handed and he gets along so well with Ismael who is very light with his hands."

Zoxtobeyou now has 4 career wins in 31 starts and earnings of over \$80,000.

Jockey Phillips had a special treat after the dead heat win aboard Royal Hatrick. After the other winning jockey, Josh Scott, had helped out with a fairly normal description of the unusual outcome, Phillips added to the story with a colourful rap that went like this:



Jockeys Tony Phillips and Josh Scott bumping elbows after sharing the win
KATINA MILNS PHOTO

DOWN THE STRETCH PODCAST

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and wherever you get your podcasts

Daryl Thiessen: From battling bulls to steering standardbreds



It was a bucket list night for 30 year-old Daryl Thiessen on August 14 when he drove My Baby Girl to a 2 length win in the fifth race at Mohawk. Thiessen has been a standardbred driver for just over a year and this was his first win on the big circuit. It was his 415th drive, most of those spread over the 'B' tracks of Ontario – Clinton, Georgian Downs, Hanover, and Grand River. The win with My Baby Girl was his 36th.

You have to wonder why a guy starts his driving career in his late 20s. What was he doing before? In the case of Thiessen, it's a bit of a surprise.

"I was in the rodeo business," he says. "I was a professional bullfighter for close to a decade and I was doing it at the highest level for five years. I travelled from south of New Orleans to northern British Columbia. I mean, it's a big circuit."

You can actually view Daryl Thiessen during his El Toro days if you input *Daryl Thiessen bull fighting* at YouTube. There's one video in which he deftly dekes and dances around an angry bull and another where he attempts to jump over the head of the animal, but doesn't quite make it.

Thiessen grew up in Elm Creek, Manitoba, a small ranching and farming community about 45 miles west of Winnipeg.

"We had a retired standardbred," he says. "My dad and my grandpa used to race, and I learned to ride on him. They would hitch the jogger up for me and I would jog around the farm as they did the chores. We grew up pretty old school. My dad would milk 5 cows every morning by hand, and that was the milk we lived on as we grew up."

So how does someone living in a tiny town in Manitoba get into bull fighting?

"My neighbour was a rodeo cowboy and they would practice getting on the broncs every Wednesday. We'd go over there, my brother and myself and my dad. One thing led to another. My brother started riding calves and steers and started getting on bulls. Next thing you know, life is going that way".

Bulls aren't known for their gentle nature. Thiessen is asked if he ever got hurt.

"Well, not so badly to the point where my life was on the line," he responds before listing an encyclopaedic list of damage. "But I've been beat up my fair share. I've had knee surgeries, broken legs, and ankles. I broke my back in two spots. I was knocked unconscious a few times. I don't know how many concussions I have had; probably more than recommended. Broken ribs. Pretty well broke my collar bone six times. Now I can't sleep on my side anymore for any extended period of time, because it just aches too much."

So, getting behind a harness horse must feel to Thiessen like being on a kiddy ride at the local fair.

"Yeah, like I don't get nervous whatsoever," he says. "It feels very common to me. The only time I get nervous is if I have a favourite. I'm nervous about messing up."

Ok, back to that winning drive at Mohawk. My Baby Girl went off at almost 7-1. Thiessen had the four year-old mare on the lead after the half, which was paced in :55. As the field turned into the stretch, the favourite, Rose Run

Victoria and Robert Shepherd, were trying in vain to get by on the outside.

"I hit three-quarters and I looked out the corner of my eye and I knew Robert was coming with that Rose Run Victoria, and I knew she was the one that I had to beat," he says. "And she looked like she was not happy about the situation being first up and I thought, 'Well I got that one beat.' But you never know who is coming from the backfield. Some of those guys can launch from the back and catch you sleeping and you don't want to look like an idiot and get picked off by someone. Late in the lane, I knew I was going to win. To do that at Mohawk against that quality of horses and those drivers, that was really important to me."

If you find the race replay on YouTube or Standardbred Canada, you will see Daryl Thiessen flat out in his sulky, completely parallel to the ground, urging My Baby Girl as if it was the last quarter mile in the Little Brown Jug.

"Well, I'm 6'3"," he laughs. "So, I got to stay small. That's something people told me when I started out. They said, 'Your size is against you, so you're going to have to stay small.' That's something I work on, the way the best in the world do it. If you want to make the big leagues, you don't go to a beer league hockey game and study that. You have to do it the way the best guys do it and you try to model your style after them. So, Tim Tetrick and Dexter Dunn, I guess I'm sure, by the way I drive, you can tell those are the people I idolize and I watch them religiously. If you want to make speed, you have to stay small in the bike to minimize speed resistance."

That's one huge thing checked off the bucket list for Thiessen. He was also thrilled with the response he got from drivers who are already legendary in his mind.

"All those guys are really supportive," he says. "Bobby McClure came up and gave me the knuckles when we were pulling up. Jody Jamieson said something to me, and Randy Waples was on the fence and he yelled out, 'Great job' and he came up to me after and said a couple of things that I am keeping to myself. That was pretty special, hearing things from guys like that who are already Hall of Famers. It just makes you feel good and know you're on the right path."

That 'path' will definitely be on the standardbred racetrack and not sacrificing flesh and bone to angry bulls.

"I'm retired now from the bulls," he says emphatically. "All I want to do is drive horses. That's all I crave. I'm at my happiest in life when I'm in the race bike. I'll do it as long as I can."



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DOWN THE STRETCH PODCAST

Episode 30 August 10

This **Down The Stretch Podcast** has two huge races from the weekend. Based on the finish of the Travers Stakes at Saratoga, **Tiz the Law** is the best three year-old thoroughbred in North America. And, applying the same logic to the Hambletonian, it is a lady horse, Ramona Hill, who is the best trotting three year-old. **Jody Jamieson** gives insight to his spectacular night at Mohawk as well as his take on the innovative Heinz Challenge. Horse racing is a dangerous sport and we find out more about how badly jockey **Jerome Lermyte** and driver **James MacDonald** were hurt in respectively scary looking spills. Fifty seven year-old jockey Ed Walton continues to lead all the kids at Ajax Downs. And thanks to **Carly Simon** for providing a sound track to this podcast. If you're wondering why, you'll just have to listen.

Episode 31 August 17

In this episode of the **Down The Stretch Podcast**, host Peter Gross delivers all kinds of horse races. There were 5 Stakes races at Woodbine on Saturday, including the \$500,000 Canadian Oaks, won by rising star, **Curlin's Voyage**. The amazing **Pink Lloyd** won another Stakes race, his 22nd added money win, his 25th conquest from 31 starts. Driver **Bob McClure** paced past the \$25 million mark, and there were longshots scoring upsets in two \$108,000 OSS Gold Series at Mohawk. **Down The Stretch** talks with jockey **Skye Chernetz** who delivered two bombs at Woodbine last week. Chernetz rode a winner for her mother, **Bonnie Eshelman**, who in the early 70s pissed off a lot of close-minded people by becoming one of the first female jockeys in Canada. Staying with the theme of parents and offspring – **Nikki Alderson** won a race at Woodbine, so her father, 57 year-old **Ed Walton** had to top her by winning twice at Ajax Downs. And how did **Daryl Thiessen** go from grappling with bulls to steering standardbreds? You'll find out when you tune in this episode of the **Down The Stretch Podcast**.

Episode 32 August 24

Peter Gross initiated the **Down The Stretch Podcast** in February. In March, he got to a point when he had no actual horse races to run. Now he has an embarrassment of riches. This podcast has multiple Stakes events from Woodbine and Mohawk and another win at Ajax Downs for the amazing **Country Boy 123**. A rare moment for track announcer **Robert Geller** who almost never misses at the finish line....but...**Down The Stretch** loves jockeys and we find out from **Marklee Z Buchanan** not only what it was like to win 4 races on one day at Fort Erie, but also what the 'Z' stands for. And just to top that, **Justin Stein** captured 6 races last Friday at Woodbine and we have the call of all of them. Teenagers are going at each other's throats in the Leamington Raceway Handicapping Challenge... and how did Peter get both **Mike Myers** and **Wayne Gretzky** into this episode? If you listen, you'll find out.

Episode 33 August 27

The 33rd **Down The Stretch Podcast** is so full of thrilling horse racing stuff that the **Pointer Sisters** joined in with the background singing. A monster pacing machine named **Tall Dark Stranger** won the North America Cup at Mohawk. The following Sunday featured three Stakes races at Woodbine. We talked with NYRA's **Keith McCalmont** about what it's like to be at Saratoga without fans. Jockey **Ed Walton's** amazing streak at Ajax Downs is still intact, so much so that novelty song performer **Ray Stevens** makes an appearance. Race caller **Kenny Middleton** gave another excellent rendition of the NA Cup, but what did he sound like when his own horse, She's a Sassy Beach, won a race as he was in the booth? You might be surprised. And bettors never agree with the judges' decisions when a horse is DQ'd, and we have two races in which horses were taken down, leaving us wondering, "Huh?". Friend of the **Down The Stretch Podcast**, **Jim McKenny**, got jammed out of a \$1,200 score even though his horse never made contact. But six days later, he got it all back and more in three glorious races from Del Mar. Find out how by listening to this episode of the **Down The Stretch Podcast**.

Episode 34 September 7

In this **Down The Stretch Podcast**, host **Peter Gross** warms up for the Queen's Plate with selections from **Jennifer Morrison**, **Jason Portuondo**, and race caller **Robert Geller**. The 146th **Kentucky Derby** ran on the first Saturday in September and despite more than \$10 million bet to win on **Tiz the Law**, there was an upset. Saturday night at Mohawk gave us the **Maple Leaf Trot** and the **Canadian Pacing Derby** and that afternoon at Woodbine, the amazing **Pink Lloyd** won again. Trainer **Bob Tiller** joins the podcast to talk about his heroic eight year-old gelding. **Mark McKelvie** of Woodbine Entertainment reveals how a limited number of fans will be allowed to watch harness racing at Mohawk Park. Jockey **Ed Walton** continued his unprecedented streak at Ajax Downs, and **Jim McKenny** sat down with host **Peter Gross** as they talked about what might have happened if they'd been allowed to go to Saratoga this summer. The only way you can hear what went down is to find the **Down The Stretch Podcast**.

Episode 35 September 14

Turns out June's loss is September's thrill. The 161st **Queen's Plate** went on September 12 at Woodbine and trainer **Josie Carroll** not only won with 15-1 shot **Mighty Heart**, she got the bottom half of a huge exactor when **Belichick** came second. We have the complete call of the Plate as well as the four other Stakes races on the card. That same night, Mohawk offered both the Peaceful Way and the William Wellwood Stakes for trotters and the latter race went to **On A Streak** who chose a half million race to break his maiden. **Down The Stretch** stole a few moments with winning driver **Scott Young** after the biggest score of his career. What did **Sandy Hawley** sound like 50 years ago when he was interviewed on Hockey Night In Canada? We have that audio and got the 2020 version of Hawley to talk about it. And the most charismatic jockey at Ajax Downs is **Tony Phillips** (aka TP). He was in full rapping mode after winning 4 races on September 7, including a dead heat.

Ontario's Quarter Horse Industry On The Way Up

By Jennifer Morrison



This is a great time to join in the excitement of owning, breeding, and racing quarter horses in Ontario with innovative new programs to the Quarter Horse Racing Industry Development Program (QHRIDP) in 2020, paving the way for a strong future for the industry.

"The new incentives created this year focus on expanding the programs," said Bob Broadstock, who represents quarter horse racing on the Ontario Racing board and is also President of the Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario. "We took away some of the barriers in some of the initiatives for people investing in the quarter horse industry."

The QHRIDP is a multi-year strategy developed to build a strong sustainable quarter horse racing and breeding industry in Ontario. The objectives are to boost racing, breeding, and industry development.

Introduced this year were added bonuses for owners to the Third-Start Program, purse increases for races such as the Alex Picov Memorial Futurity for two year-olds, renewing the popular Princess Derby Stakes for fillies, and the Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario's successful Horse Purchase Program.

This Princess Breeding Incentive enables the connections of the 10 participating fillies in the Princess Derby Stakes to receive a certificate for \$2,500, redeemable upon producing a live foal in Ontario.

Third Start Bonus

If an owner or trainer buys a horse to race at Ajax Downs and that horse makes at least three starts, both the owner and trainer are eligible for a \$1,000 stipend. The bonus previously was granted only to trainers. "Also, two year-olds who make three starts, or three year-olds who did not get in their three starts as juveniles, are eligible for the bonus," said Broadstock. "Plus, all the horses bought through the Horse Purchase Program new to Ajax are eligible."

Stakes Race Boosts

Welcomed back in 2020 was the Princess Derby, a race for three year-old fillies that is intended to encourage investment in quality fillies to be bred and to produce foals in Ontario. The race was immediately popular with quarter horse racing people as more than two dozen fillies were nominated this spring and there were two trials. The final, held on August 5, was won by Ontario-bred One Kool Dynasty, owned by Belinda Taggart and bred by Bill Taggart. The Alex Picov Memorial Futurity, one of Ajax Downs' most famous races, had its purse boosted to \$100,000-added for 2020. There have been over 40 nominated two year-olds and trials will be held September 14 with the final on October 5.

"Increasing the purse of the Futurity was very much targeted on getting new investment in quarter horses

since the race is offered in a horse's first year of racing," said Broadstock.

Horse Purchase Program

Some 25 horses arrived at Ajax Downs to race in 2020, thanks to the Horse Purchase Program. An interest free-loan of up to \$5,000 was offered to buyers who registered, providing funds for the purchase of a horse.

"It worked very, very well," said Broadstock. "It will be back for 2021 as it's seed money and we should be able to retrieve the money back to keep using it for next year."

Breeding Bonuses

If you breed a mare in Ontario, when she is confirmed in-foal after the 60-day mark, the breeder can apply to receive a \$1,000 Mare Breeding Incentive cheque. Broadstock said numbers of mares bred in 2020 showed an increase over 2019 and says 2021 numbers should also be on the rise.

The Embryo Transfer aspect of the QHRIDP was also expanded in 2020. Embryo transfer has been permitted in quarter horse racing for many years, but Ontario breeders were only allowed to receive bonuses on one foal per mare.

"We removed the limitation of the number of embryo transfers so that people who have less broodmares can produce more Ontario bred and sired foals," said Broadstock. "More foals help race field size."

Broadstock is encouraged by how well the 2020 racing season has progressed, despite being restricted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This year, the purse money has been spread out to many different owners and breeders. I really believe there is a lot more positivism from owners and breeders who are already talking about going to a sale in the winter to buy more horses, even with the difficulty of the COVID-19 pandemic." Broadstock noted the advancement of the QHRIDP has been made possible by the Ontario government's pledge to invest in the future of quarter horse racing by keeping Ajax Downs open for racing and funding through Ontario racing.

"I think these programs are intended to stick around and hopefully expand even more over the years as things start to get better in the industry," said Broadstock.

That would be great news for the dedicated members, and the newest members of the fastest equine sport in the world.

Trials and tributes at Ajax Downs

Three upcoming Stakes races at Ajax Downs required trials on September 14 to determine the final fields. The \$100,000 Alex Picov Memorial Futurity goes on October 5 and racing fans saw two more examples of girls beating the boys. In the first trial, it was Streakinlilwagon, a two year-old filly that got up by half a length under Helen Vanek. Streakinlilwagon (\$6.50) is trained by Jason Pascoe and he shares ownership with Bryanne Langford's GFR Equine Services.

In the second trial, it was another filly, Ah Candyland, winning by a head for rider Ed Walton. Ah

Candyland paid \$17.30 for trainer Michelle Woodley and owner Richard Wincikaby. Each winner gets into the final and the next 8 fastest times also advance to complete the field of 10.

The Picov Derby will be run on September 28 and One Kool Dynasty will be a low price on the board after she carried Helen Vanek to victory in the first 400 yard trial. One Kool Dynasty paid \$5.40, is owned by Belinda Taggart and is also trained by Jason Pascoe.

Tony Phillips unleashed Eazy Street (\$6.90) to a one-length win in the second trial. Eazy Street was

last year's two year-old champion. He is owned and bred by Carol and Jaime Robertson and trained by Bryn Robertson.

There were also a pair of trials for the Ontario Bred Maturity and both winners were ridden by Ismael Mosquiera who also rides thoroughbreds at Woodbine and Fort Erie. Five Bar Fandango (\$7.30) scored in the first trial for the Robertson family and it was Tres On Fire winning the second trial. Tres On Fire (\$12.60) is owned by Big Dog Stable and trained by Carol McIntyre. The Ontario Bred Maturity final is September 28.

In the fight of her life:

2012 trainer of the year Shelley Brown has a lot of friends By George Williams

This story first appeared on September 13 in the Winnipeg Free Press

The first woman in the history of Assiniboia Downs to win the trainer title outright in 2012 and one of the top conditioners at the Downs for more than a decade, Shelley



Brown was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer in early September. She went to the hospital thinking she had a torn rotator cuff.

The record-breaking 2020 race meeting at Assiniboia Downs has come, but for 47 year-old trainer Shelley Brown the battle is just getting started.

Brown had been throwing bales and had been slammed into the wall by one of her horses, but she'd been busy with racing until Wednesday and didn't really want to spend any time in the emergency room. Finally, the gnawing pain convinced her to visit Grace Hospital. She thought she needed an MRI, but it appeared she was only going to get an X-ray, which she almost didn't stay for.

"If they'd said it was going to take an hour and a half, honestly, I would have left," said Brown, who would rather be in her barn than anywhere else in the world. "But it wasn't busy and they said they'd have me in and out in 15 minutes."

Twenty minutes later Brown was in an ambulance on her way to Health Sciences Centre. They'd found a large mass on her left lung. Within 30 minutes of arriving at Health Sciences Centre, they'd done a number of different scans.

"I knew it wasn't good when the doctor came in," said Brown. "He turned around and closed all the drapes and pulled up a chair and said, 'Shelley, it's not good. I'm in disbelief of what I'm seeing on the CT Scan.' I still thought it was just about my lung. He said, 'If it were only your lung, that would be a huge issue. What you're going to be facing right now is very, very serious. There's no sense in sugar-coating it. You've got cancer and it's everywhere.'"

Brown was shocked. Her left lung had a large hole in it. Her right lung had a lesion, her right breast, lymph nodes, stomach and ovaries were also cancerous.

"And then the doctor said, 'I wish it stopped there,'" said Brown. "He said 'You've got bone cancer as well. You've got cancer in your left femur, hips, your pelvis, your spine, your sternum, your shoulder, and your right bottom rib. There are three doctors here and we're all looking at your CT scans and we're looking at you and thinking this can't even be possible. You've got cancer everywhere.'"

Brown had gone into the hospital thinking she was tired and sore from throwing bales and helping with stalls. A hands-on trainer not afraid of physical work, she was trying to explain the pain away, thinking she was getting older and that maybe she should start taking it easier. She was expecting to just work her way through it. Now she's spoiling for a fight.

Three days later, they let Brown out of the hospital. Her brother Dean arrived from Montreal and sister Lynne came in from Regina to help formulate a plan. They've already started looking into treatment centres in the United States including the Mayo Clinic, where Brown said the minimum cost just to get started is US \$50,000.

A tack sale has already been organized at the Downs, and her childhood friend from Regina, Bree Gust, started a GoFundMe page for Brown.

One of the hardest-working, most genuine people you could ever hope to meet at the racetrack, Brown has compiled a record of 320-319-314 from 1,993 starts in her 11-year career as trainer. She's been a Top 3 trainer at the Downs almost since the beginning and is always a force to be reckoned with, saddling numerous champions and Stakes winners including Golden Stripe, Can't Use Nellie, Stevie Mac, Cash or Card, and this year's Derby Trial winner Real Grace. She currently sits third in the local trainer standings with a record of 21-32-34 from 166 starts.

As someone who has never asked for help from anyone, Brown choked back tears as she spoke of the kindness shown to her by so many people.

"I'm just overwhelmed by the support," she said. "And so thankful. From the racetrack and everybody here. It's been so amazing. Jared Brown has been helping me saddle the horses, and the calls, the messages... It's just, you know... sometimes you think you're a minnow swimming in this big sea, and you don't realize that there are a lot of other people right there with you. You don't really realize how many people know you. You don't really think you've touched anybody's life enough for them to even acknowledge you. The messages I've received are just incredible."

Brown's plan was to sell all her tack at the barn, but some close friends changed her mind. They suggested that keeping a few saddles and bridles, and maybe a horse, would give her something to hope for, as she enters the starting gate...

For the fight of her life.



ODDITIES & ENTITIES

Saratoga is not normally the place you think of to claim a horse. But on August 14, all 8 horses that ran in the 6th race were claimed for \$20,000 each. Strangely, not one of the trainers that halted a new horse, had one running in this one.

SARATOGA - August 14, 2020 - Race 6
 CLAIMING - Thoroughbred
 FOR THREE YEAR OLDS AND UPWARD, Three Year Olds, 120 lbs., Older, 124 lbs. Non-winners Of A Race In 2020 Allowed 2 lbs. Claiming Price \$20,000 (Maiden and Claiming races for \$10,000 or less not considered in allowances). Claiming Price: \$20,000
 Sex And One Half Furlongs On The Dirt Track Record: (Quality Road - 1:13.74 - August 3, 2009)
 Purse: \$43,000
 Available Money: \$43,000
 Value of Race: \$43,000 1st \$23,050, 2nd \$8,000, 3rd \$5,160, 4th \$2,580, 5th \$1,720, 6th \$430, 7th \$430, 8th \$430
 Weather: Clear Track: Fast
 Off at: 4:07 Start: Good for all

Last Raced	Pgm	Horse Name (Jockey)	Wgt	M/E	PP	Start	1/4	1/2	Str	Fin	Odds	Comments
19JUN20 "SAR"	3	Malibu Pro (Davis, Dylan)	122	L b	1 1	4 ¹	8 ¹	8 ¹	1 1/2	1 1/2	14.00	leadSp into lane, drng bobbled brkns turn
26JUN20 "SAR"	7	Family Biz (Carmouche, Kendrick)	124	L b	6 8	8	8	8	2 1/4	3 1/4	4.40	outside, 2-3 path, 4p 1/4
26JUN20 "SAR"	1A	Clench (Leciano, Jose)	122	L	4 3	7 ¹	7 ¹	7 ¹	6 ²	6 ²	1.00 ²	3-4w turn, out over 3/16
27JUN20 "TOP"	6	Life In Shambles (Ortiz, Jr., Irad)	124	L b	5 7	7 ¹	7 ¹	7 ¹	6 ²	6 ²	9.30	2-3w turn, 5w into lane
26JUN20 "SAR"	4	Cottandmississippi (Gaffalione, Tyler)	122	L f	2 5	6 ¹	6 ¹	6 ¹	5 ¹	5 ¹	5.10	ck 3/16, less turn lined
26FEB20 "AQL"	5	Shamrocked (Franco, Manuel)	122	L b f	3 6	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	3 ²	6 ³ 3/4	5.10	3-4w turn, 5w into lane
10JUN20 "BEL"	8	Thousand Percent (Canoel, Eric)	124	L b	7 2	6 ¹	6 ¹	6 ¹	7 ¹ 1/2	7 ¹ 1/2	10.50	3-4w turn, 5w into lane
28JUN20 "BEL"	9	California Night (Oziz, Jose)	122	L b f	8 4	3 ¹	6 ¹	8	8	8	5.50	drop back turn, 7w 1/4

Fractional Times: 22.33 45.36 1:10.30
 Split Times: (23.03) (24.94) (6.87)
 Run-Up: 80 feet
 Winner: Malibu Pro, Dark Bay or Brown Gelding, by Malibu Moon out of Pro Pink, by Touch Gold. Foaled Apr 12, 2013 in Kentucky. Winner's sire standing at Spendthrift Farm
 Breeder: Joe Novogratz
 Winning Owner: Manhattan Racing Stable
 8 Claimed Horse(s): California Night New Trainer: David A. Cannizzo New Owner: Flying P Stable
 Clench New Trainer: Merikan Kantarnaci New Owner: America's Pastime Stables
 Cottandmississippi New Trainer: Edward J. DeLauro New Owner: Eleven Stars Racing Stables
 Family Biz New Trainer: Robert N. Faicone, Jr. New Owner: Sanford J. Goldfarb
 Life In Shambles New Trainer: Rob Atlas New Owner: Lawrence P. Roman
 Malibu Pro New Trainer: A. C. Avila New Owner: Drawing Away Stable
 Shamrocked New Trainer: Thomas Morley New Owner: Matthew Schers
 Thousand Percent New Trainer: Chad Summers New Owner: Martin P. Shaw
 Claiming Prices: 3 - Malibu Pro: \$20,000; 7 - Family Biz: \$20,000; 1A - Clench: \$20,000; 6 - Life In Shambles: \$20,000; 4 - Cottandmississippi: \$20,000; 5 - Shamrocked: \$20,000; 8 - Thousand Percent: \$20,000; 9 - California Night: \$20,000;
 Scratched Horse(s): Eye Lovz Lulu (Trainer), Topper T (Veterinarian)
 Total WPS Pool: \$456,739

Pgm	Horse	Win	Place	Show	Wager Type	Winning Numbers	Payoff	Pool
3	Malibu Pro	31.20	10.80	6.00	\$1.00 Exacta	3-7	130.00	351,893
7	Family Biz	9.90	6.50	4.10	\$0.50 Trifecta	3-7-1	257.75	181,363
1A	Clench				\$1.00 Pick 3	5-7-3 (3 correct)	331.00	122,105
					\$1.00 Daily Double	7-3	66.00	80,254
					\$0.10 Superfecta	3-7-1-6	265.85	93,602

Past Performance Running Line Preview

Pgm	Horse Name	Start	1/4	1/2	Str	Fin
3	Malibu Pro	1	4 ¹	8 ¹	1 1/2	1 1/2
7	Family Biz	8	8 ¹	8 ¹	2 1/4	3 1/4

You think this story needed a proof reader?

Belmont could be revenge race

By Gary B. Graves
 The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Briefly off the radar to set himself straight, Authentic now might have to get used to having a target on his back.

Bob Baffert's latest star achieved that by blowing past Kentucky Derby favorite Tiz the Law to win going away Saturday at Churchill Downs. Though Authentic shattered hopes for a Triple Crown winner this year, it raised questions about what he'll do for an encore, which could include a possible rematch against Tiz the Law at the Preakness in Baltimore on Oct. 3. That race is the final jewel in this year's reshuffled Triple Crown. Tiz the Law's team suggested the Derby that the colt

Authentic, left, crosses the finish line ahead of Tiz the Law to win the Kentucky Derby. The loss cost Tiz the Law a shot at the Triple Crown and he can get his revenge at the Belmont Stakes, where the two could meet again with, though Baffert touted Tiz the Law as a formidable foe at the morning before heading back to California.

To celebrate 21 full years calling the races at Mohawk, Ken Middleton posted this image. Did he call the horses backward?



A couple of guys had to mask their disappointment over Clayton's 3rd place finish in the Queen's Plate



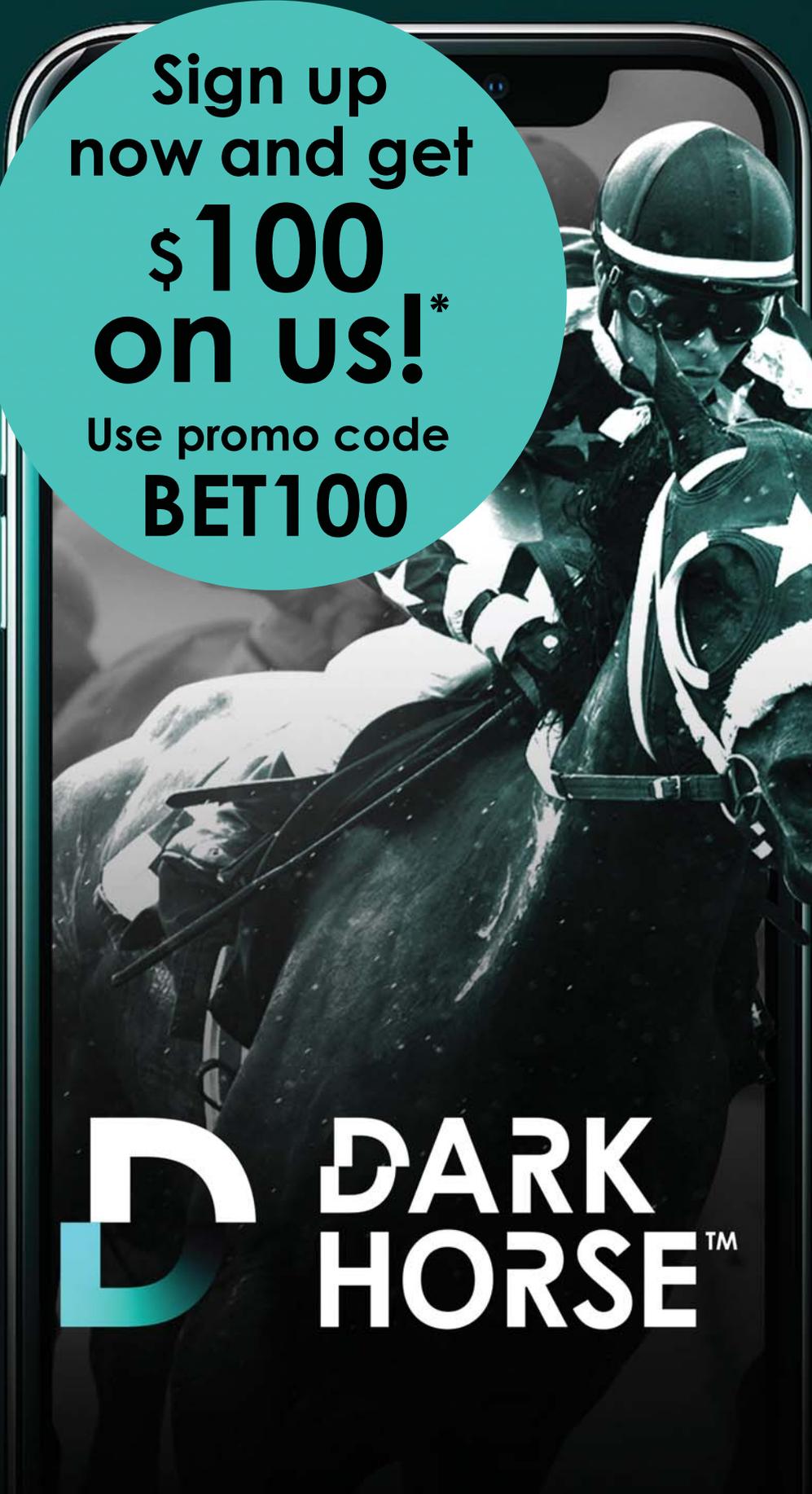
AJAX DOWNS SEP 14 RACE 10

GM#	HORSE	WIN POOL	JOCKEY	MLO	WIN ODDS
1	Eazy Street	\$932	Tony Phillips	4	6/5
2	Chalk Cliffs	\$944	Ed Walton	3	6/5
3	Tempting First Dash	\$922	Cory Spataro	5	6/5
4	Jc Separates You	\$42	Helen Marie Vanek	10	99
5	Sweet Night Fever	\$45	Ramiro Sanchez Castillo	15	80
6	Cc Senator Page	\$26	Cc Senator Page	7	99
7	Marianita Csj	\$72	Ismael Eluid Mosqueira	9/2	45
POOL TOTALS		\$2,987			

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