

DOWN THE STRETCH

CANADA'S MOST INFORMATIVE AND ENTERTAINING HORSE RACING NEWSPAPER

Here we *don't* go again!



**Sovereign
Awards**
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They were fans of horse racing, so they started Fans of Horse Racing

Mark Hetherman, 64, and his son, Joey, 23, initiated their Twitter-based Fans of Horse Racing project last June. This has everything to do with their love of the sport and their desire to create a balance when people talk about it.

"In horse racing, there can be an ongoing negative approach," says Mark Hetherman. "We thought that we've met a lot of great people in the sport, a lot of the jockeys and trainers, and we wanted to show people that there's a lot of good in the game."

Father and son have some great travelling experience that lends itself to storytelling and a well researched backdrop for commentary on racing. We got Hetherman to list all the tracks he's had the pleasure of visiting.

"Well, there's Woodbine, Mohawk, Flamboro, Western Fair, Fort Erie, Hiawatha Horse Park, Rideau Carlton, Hippodrome in Quebec, Stampede Park, Northlands Park, Fraser Downs, and Assiniboia Downs," he starts. "Then in the U.S., we've gone to Emerald Downs because we lived in Seattle for three years, Golden Gate, Fairgrounds, Delta Downs, Tampa Bay, Gulfstream, Pompano, Pocono, Presquile Downs, and Mountaineer."

Fans of Horse Racing, almost by definition, wishes to promote the uplifting elements of the sport.

"We've been fans of drivers and jockeys who often take fan abuse because it's a wagering game and when you don't win money, it's easy to attribute blame," says Hetherman. "Then we started thinking about the breeding side. It's amazing. I've been to a number of breeding farms and witnessed the whole process and we felt that almost nothing was done from that perspective. We've done a whole section on female power on all the women in the sport. We've done 50 articles on that aspect. It's a big piece of horse racing that kind of gets lost in today's world of gender equality. Horse racing has a massive number

of women participating in the sport at every level from executives to people working with the horses, grooms, trainer, hot walkers and, of course, the jockeys."

The Hethermans like to bet on the horses – hey who doesn't, but Mark is a little sheepish to reveal his biggest win at the track.

"My greatest score embarrassingly enough was a quick pick that I did at Greenwood years ago," he says. "I was just hanging around waiting for a specific race and I went to the automatic machine and hit a quick pick. It paid \$3,000 and change. So, it wasn't a result of my brilliant handicapping. However, that is a good feature for people that the machines do have a kind of slot machine approach to them, that you can hit a quick pick and have a chance to win."

When we spoke with Hetherman, he seemed on the fence about who he thought might win the Kentucky Derby. Then he lays a huge scoop on us. He owned the horse that last year won the Derby and the Haskell Stakes. Well, sort of.

"We bought a couple shares from Myracehorse.com of Authentic," he reveals. "So, we had a great year watching him compete in the big races and making all his winnings and then retiring to the breeding shed. That's a great positive in this sport – the ability to get into ownership for a very small investment. There's nothing nicer than going to the racetrack and seeing your name in a program."

The fractional ownership story of Authentic is fascinating. Myracehorse.com owns 12.5% of Authentic and that is comprised of 5,300 shares that cost \$206 each. Even though Authentic won over \$7.2 million in his abbreviated racing career (6 wins, 2 seconds in 8 starts), the micro shareholders haven't been cashed out. There is genuine anticipation that the proceeds from Authentic the stallion might produce small cheques in each of the next

10 years. Authentic's initial stud fee is \$75,000.

As Fans of Horse Racing expands, Hetherman advises they will be adding a handicapping side.

"Anybody can pick a favourite – just look at the program," he says. "But we'll be using our experience to select out some long shots, Pick 3s and Pick 4s that you can buy for twenty cents and maybe hit a decent return on your wager. For someone who finds the form too complicated, rather than spending a lot of time trying to figure it all out, we'll provide a couple of tips to help them enjoy their night at the races."

There's one aspect of horse racing that Hetherman is very passionate about. With all the major sports struggling with equal hiring challenges, horse racing seems to be at the leading edge of that argument.

"In horse racing, there's no quota," says Hetherman. "If you're good enough, you just get to do it. You don't have to be incentivised. You don't have to be told to hire people. Because it's a sport of money, whatever gets your horse to the finish line is all that matters. The colour of your skin and the nature of your gender mean nothing if you're good at what you do. This is what makes horse racing much more fair than other sports."

Down The Stretch encourages you to find Fans of Horse Racing and it's easier than picking an exactor in a five horse race.

"Just go to Twitter.com and look for

@FansHorseRacin1," instructs Hetherman. You will know you're in the right place when you see their message: FANS OF HORSERACING@FansHorseRacin1. WE CELEBRATE the BIG positive NEWS of HORSE RACING. We scour all Racing news to bring you the positive stories each day. No need to do it yourself, follow us.

Bob Burgess

Courtesy Woodbine Entertainment



The Ontario horse racing community mourns the loss of Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame, standardbred builder Robert (Bob) Burgess. Mr. Burgess was a lawyer specializing in equine law who achieved great success within harness racing as both a co-owner and breeder.

As the co-owner of Cantario Farms in Campbellville, Ontario, Mr. Burgess became one of Canadian harness racing leading breeders throughout

the 1970s, '80s and early '90s. Some of his most notable horses include 2007 North America Cup champion Tell All, 2003 Hambletonian winner Amigo Hall, along with 2006 Hambletonian, trotting Triple Crown, and U.S. Horse of the Year award winner Glidemaster. As a prominent Canadian breeder, Mr. Burgess achieved phenomenal success by syndicating 2000 Canadian Horse of the Year Balanced Image, who produced more winners than any trotter in history.

In addition to being a past president of the Canadian Standardbred Horse Society, he served on the Woodbine Entertainment Board of Directors and was the council for the industry association that advocated for the formation of the Ontario Sires Stakes program.

"Bob had a tremendous enthusiasm for harness racing and worked hard to improve the areas of the industry he was passionate about," said Jim Lawson, CEO of Woodbine Entertainment. "On behalf of

Woodbine Entertainment, we send our condolences to Bob's many friends and family."

Born in Peterborough, Ontario, Mr. Burgess's family would also live in Quebec City before he journeyed to Toronto to practice law. In 2011 he was inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame as a standardbred builder a year after winning an O'Brien Award for Canada's top two-year-old trotting colt, his homebred Blue Porsche, in 2010.

Mr. Burgess passed away on April 3, 2021. He was 85 years old. Bob is survived by his dedicated and caring wife Heather and her family, and his five children from his first wife, the late Vera: Blair (Karin), Timothy (Lan), Pamela (Michael), Stephanie (Stephen) and Katherine (Christopher). Bob is also survived by his 17 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Bob also leaves his brother Richard (Odette), sister-in-law Vera (Carl, deceased), while predeceased by sister-in-law Eva (George, deceased).

THE EDITOR WEIGHS IN



My brain is split in two. There's a dead heat of opinions. Third period of overtime. Game still tied.

I get that there should be a lockdown. It makes sense to do everything possible to prevent the spread of a virus so easily transmitted, it jumps from person to person faster than a rumour on Facebook.

I find it difficult to fire criticism at the Mayor, the Premier, the Prime Minister. I'm grateful I don't have to make these awful decisions.

If you go one way, people will die. The other way, businesses collapse, hard working persons lose everything. Families in peril.

As Simon and Garfunkel used to say
Every way you look at this you lose
Coo coo ka choo Mrs. Robinson

*Your love affair with Ben has been postponed
Woo woo woo*

Even so, that the lockdown means horse racing must stop does not make sense to me. The consequences of months of stoppage are profound. Owners take their horses to tracks in the U.S. that are still operating. Out of town stables amend any plans to bring their horses to Canada.

The premise that allowing horse racing to be conducted would create anger and frustration with the masses is a non-starter.

How come my hair dressing salon has to be closed, but the horses are allowed to run?

"Because," responds the State. "They've proven there's no risk and this saves millions of taxpayer dollars."

My position is coloured by the fact that I publish a

horse racing newspaper. My preference is to talk about the great rides of Emma-Jayne, Justin, Luis, Patrick, and Rafael. I want to rhapsodize about the brilliant driving at Mohawk by Doug, Sylvain, Bob, and Jody.

That being said, this issue of **Down The Stretch** has a lot of fascinating and pertinent horse racing stuff. The Sovereign Awards had a virtual delivery on April 15 and we have a wrap (pages 4-5) of all the winners. I do have to say that it kind of disturbs me that Josie Carroll did not win in the trainer category. Chris Lomon won for Outstanding Writer and that's two big thrills in a short time for Lomon because we liked his story on teenager Joshua Attard so much that we 'sampled' it (page 23).

Women in horse racing has always been a major theme of this paper. We caught up with Chantal Sutherland who, at 45, is still incredibly fit and bringing in prize horses at Gulfstream (page 15). Then there's 31 year-old Irish Jockey Rachael Blackmore. She won the gruelling Grand National at Aintree to become the first woman rider to do so (page 13). Gail Cox trained a horse for Sam-Son Farm that looked brilliant, winning in its very first race at Gulfstream (page 14). Harness trainer Camilla Christoforou needed just one race to get her first win at Mohawk (page 14).

Before the lockdown, there was some exciting racing at Mohawk. On March 22, Sylvain Filion delivered six horses to the winners circle (page 7).

All the significant preps for the Kentucky Derby have been run. Based on the outcome of the 13 races that we document on pages 10-11, there is no clear favourite and plenty of value horses for the May 1 classic at Churchill Downs.

It was eleven years ago that David Willmot, then the CEO of Woodbine, persuaded **Down The Stretch** to include Owners of the Month in each issue. Since then, we have sculpted out more than 100 thoroughbred and standardbred owner features. This month, Dale Desruisseaux (page 16) tells us why he gave up selling pizzas for race horses, and Kyle Ruhl (page 17) comes from a long line of standardbred participants, but he's just starting what will probably be a lifetime in the sport.

And beginning in our next issue, we will bring you a series of features on people who own Quarter horses.

Brian Henderson punched tickets at Ontario racetracks for 50 years, then wrote a book about it. On page 18 read our review of his Win Place Show, a collection of crazy, hilarious, and sometimes frustrating experiences as a ticket seller at the track.

Every issue we create a cartoon (page 9) and every issue we fill a page (27) with our Oddities and Entities, a basketful of unusual, bizarre, head-scratching things that can only happen in horse racing.

Please enjoy this issue. Make sure you sit at least six feet away from the screen as you enjoy us on-line at www.downthestretchnewspaper.com.

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The 2020 Sovereign Awards

“I have no idea if I’m doing a good job here,” cracked Jason Portuondo, host of the 46th Annual Sovereign Awards. For the second year in a row, the awards were virtual and Portuondo looked a little lonesome all by himself in a dark little studio, with no audience to play for. Take a breath Jason – you did fine.

So did Josie Carroll, with a caveat. Horses she trained won as Outstanding Three Year-Old Colt (Mighty Heart) and as Outstanding Three Year-Old Female (Curlin’s Voyage) and Mighty Heart was a popular recipient as Horse of the Year. Carroll swept the Canadian Triple Crown, winning the Queen’s Plate and Prince of Wales Stakes with Mighty Heart and the Breeders’ Stakes with Belichik, and that seemed to

many to be her inside post to the Outstanding Trainer Sovereign, but once again it went to Mark Casse, whose overall stats were, apparently, persuasive to the voters. Casse earned 120 first place votes to 100 for Carroll. It was his 10th straight award as the country’s top trainer

and his 13th overall.

Rafael Hernandez was named Outstanding Jockey, and it was Mauricio Malvaez, who did all his good work at Century Mile Race Track in Edmonton named as the Outstanding Apprentice.

Woodbine producer Paul Salvaggio voiced a stirring tribute to Sam-Son Farm, which received the Special Sovereign recognizing so many decades of producing internationally successful racehorses. And though Sam-Son sold off most of its racing stock in 2020, the organization still scored another Sovereign – for Danceforthe Cause, named the outstanding Broodmare of the year. Below are all the winners and the vote totals:



Outstanding Photograph:

WILL WONG

MambointheForest

Outstanding Writing:

CHRIS LOMON

The Pep-Talking Groom, Willy, and a Queen’s Plate Crown

Outstanding Digital Audio/Visual & Broadcast:

SANTINO DI PAOLA

Dear Horse Racing

Aired, June 8th, 2020; Paulick Report website

Outstanding Groom Award: Michelle Gibson

Champion Older Main Track Male: SKYWIRE

Trainer: Mark E. Casse

Owner: Gary Barber and Lucio Tucci

Skywire (116), Pink Lloyd (94), Mr. Ritz (24)

Champion Older Main Track Female: SOUPER ESCAPE

Trainer: Michael J. Trombetta

Owner: Live Oak Plantation

Souper Escape (142), Painting (52), Summer Sunday (32)

Champion Three-Year-Old Male: MIGHTY HEART

Trainer: Josie Carroll

Owner: Lawrence Cordes

Mighty Heart (149), Belichick (78), Shirl’s Speight (31)

Champion Three-Year-Old Female: CURLIN’S VOYAGE

Trainer: Josie Carroll

Owner: Hill ‘n’ Dale Equine Holdings, Inc. (J. G. Sikura) and Windsor Boys Racing

Curlin’s Voyage (83), Merveilleux (76), Artie’s Princess (72)

Outstanding Apprentice Jockey: MAURICIO MALVAEZ

Mauricio Malvaez (154), Nikki Alderson (60), Edgar Zenteno (59)

Outstanding Jockey: RAFAEL HERNANDEZ

Rafael Hernandez (145), Justin Stein (82), Patrick Husbands (13)

Outstanding Trainer: MARK CASSE

Mark Casse (120), Josie Carroll (100), Kevin Attard (50)

Champion Male Sprinter: PINK LLOYD

Trainer: Robert P. Tiller

Owner: Entourage Stable

Pink Lloyd (142), Silent Poet (95), Not So Quiet (35)

Champion Female Sprinter: ARTIE’S PRINCESS

Trainer: Wesley Ward

Owner: Kenneth L. and Sarah K. Ramsey

Artie’s Princess (133), Lady Grace (45), Boardroom (38)

Special Sovereign Award: SAM-SON FARM

Outstanding Breeder: TALL OAKS FARM

Tall Oaks Farm (103), Sam-Son Farm (93), Anderson Farms Ont. Inc. (48)

Outstanding Broodmare: DANCEFORTHECAUSE

Danceforthe Cause (75), Include Katherine (62), Count to Three (59)

Champion Two-Year-Old Male: GRETZKY THE GREAT

Trainer: Mark E. Casse

Owner: Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners and Gary Barber

Gretzky the Great (152), Ready to Repeat (46), Stephen (27), Master Spy (27)

Champion Two-Year-Old Female: LADY SPEIGHTSPEARE

Trainer: Roger L. Attfield

Owner: Charles E. Fipke

Lady Speightspeare (148), Dreaming of Drew (54), Alda (39)

Champion Male Turf Horse: SAY THE WORD

Trainer: D’Amato Philip

Owner: Agave Racing Stable and Sam-Son Farm

Say the Word (111), Silent Poet (79), Count Again (74)

Champion Female Turf Horse: THEODORA B.

Trainer: Michael W. Dickinson

Owner: Augustin Stable

Theodora B. (90), Rideforthe Cause (88), Elizabeth Way (47)

Outstanding Owner: LIVE OAK PLANTATION

Live Oak Plantation (124), Sam-Son Farm (51), Gary Barber (35)

Horse of the Year: MIGHTY HEART

Trainer: Josie Carroll

Owner: Lawrence Cordes

Mighty Heart (95), Pink Lloyd (78), Silent Poet (30)

This stunning image of Mambointheforest won the Sovereign Award for Photography for Will Wong



Proof that mom deserved her Sovereign



Now how's this for paying tribute to mom? At the Sovereigns, Sam-Son Farm's Danceforthe cause was named Canada's outstanding broodmare. Two days later at Keeneland, a six year-old son of Dance-

forthe cause, Say the Word, was carrying Luis Saez in the Garde III \$200,000 Elkhorn Stakes at 1½ miles on the grass. Say the Word ran in fourth place for the first mile, but when Saez said the word, the gelding responded, passed his rivals and pulled away shortly before the wire to win by 1½ lengths in 2:28.26, less than 1½ seconds off the course record of 2:26.90. Sam-Son Farm shares ownership with Agave Racing Stable and the trainer is Philip D'Amato. As the second betting choice, Say the Word returned \$7.20. This was his second win at Keeneland and his sixth overall in 29 races. Say the Word won the Grade I Northern Dancer Turf at Woodbine last year and also has wins at Saratoga, Belmont, and Tampa Bay.



Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame



Class of 2021



JIM BULLOCK
STANDARD BRED BUILDER

Iron Horse Photo



RANDY WAPLES
STANDARD BRED DRIVER

Dave Landry Photo



GREAT MEMORIES
STANDARD BRED FEMALE HORSE

Dave Landry Photo



VICKI PAPPAS
THOROUGHBRED BUILDER

Dave Landry Photo



HEART TO HEART
THOROUGHBRED MALE HORSE

Equisport Photo



NOT TOO SHY
THOROUGHBRED VETERAN

Burns Photo

Three people, three horses into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame

The Standardbred Election Committee selections for 2021 include builder Jim Bullock, driver Randy Waples, and female horse, Great Memories.

Jim Bullock from Erie, Ontario has made immense contributions to the Canadian harness racing industry over the past 30 years. He has been an owner, breeder, stallion syndicator, race track administrator, and organization leader. Three of his stallions – Balanced Image, Angus Hall, and Apaches Fame are already members of the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame. Bullock's Glengate Farms has up to 30 top quality trotting broodmares and is also the co-breeder of double millionaire, Art Official, world champion JL Cruze, and Hall of Fame inductee Odies Fame. It's fitting that another Glengate Farms bred mare, Great Memories, is also getting into the Hall this year as well.

Driver Randy Waples was born with harness racing in his blood. After several years proving his worth at multiple smaller tracks throughout Ontario, his breakthrough occurred in 1986 when he won 150 races in 1,197 starts. That was the first of 22 consecutive years in which his earnings exceeded \$1 million. He captured the 2012 North America Cup with Thinking Out Loud, took down the Maple Leaf Trot three

times with San Pail, and won the Canadian Pacing Derby twice, with Strong Clan (1997), and State Treasurer (2016). In April, 2018 when harness racing moved fulltime to Mohawk Park, Waples was declared the all-time leading money winning driver of races held in Canada thanks to his 6,600 wins and \$131 million in purse earnings.

Great Memories, the Standardbred Female Horse inductee was purchased as a yearling by Kenneth Fraser and Duane Marfisi. As a broodmare, she has produced two world champions – Warrawee Needy (1:48.4) who won 29 times and accumulated more than \$1.25 million, and Warrawee Ubeaut (1:48.4) who won 21 of 45 starts and earned over \$1.9 million.

Builder Vicki Pappas is being ushered into the Hall to celebrate a 40 year career in various elements of the thoroughbred industry. She started as a groom, has been a trainer, owner and breeder, and is the face of the Woodbine Sales Company. Perhaps her most important work is as chairperson of the LongRun Thoroughbred Retirement Society, which is recognized as one of North America's most respected horse retirement and adoption organizations. LongRun has successfully

retired and adopted over 1,000 racehorses.

The Thoroughbred Male Horse Inductee for 2021 is **Heart to Heart**. He was purchased for \$25,000 by Alberta's Terry Hamilton at the CTHS yearling sale in 2012. That was a good buy – Heart to Heart won 15 races and put over \$2 million in the bank. Heart to Heart won the Sovereign as Champion three year-old in 2014 thanks to 4 win in 8 starts that included a pair of Grade III scores at Churchill Downs. Heart to Heart won 11 grade Stakes races in the U.S., winning at Belmont, Monmouth, Saratoga, and Churchill.

The other thoroughbred horse being inducted for 2021 is **Not Too Shy**. He was bred and owned by Conn Smythe and, after winning just twice as a two year-old in 1968, she put up great numbers in the next three years, winning the Fury, the Wonder Where, the Maple Leaf, and the Duchess Stakes. After losing by a head to Kinghaven Farms' Cool Mood in the 1969 Canadian Oaks, Not Too Shy pulled off magnificent revenge, defeating Cool Mood in each of the next three times they raced against each other. As a four year-old, she won the Seaway, Canadian, Belle Mahone, Tattling, and the Maple Leafs Stakes for a second time. Not Too Shy won 23 of her 55 races and hit the board 41 times.

Sylvain's sensational six



Sheswildnfree was one of 6 winners for Sylvain Filion

Newimagemedia Photo

Monday, March 22, was an amazing night for driver Sylvain Filion, who won 6 of the 11 races at Mohawk Park. Filion's epic evening began in the second race. He gunned the four year-old mare, Sheswildnfree, right to the top in the \$34,000 final of the Wine and Roses Trotting series and Sheswildnfree pummeled her seven opponents, winning by more than 4 lengths in 1:54.2. The winning trainer was Ben Baillargeon for Tom and Elizabeth Rankin. Sheswildnfree paid just \$2.90.

Filion won the fourth race, an \$8,000 pace with Cool Rock who erupted in the middle of the track to pass the leaders in the final 100 yards for a 1:53.1 score. Cool Rock is a thirteen year-old gelding trained by Richard Moreau who shares ownership with Don Beanland and Michel Gaudreault, and a lot of bettors had to share the \$3.70 win price.

The sixth race was a \$16,000 pace and Filion had another heavy favourite, Bettim Again who prevailed by almost 2 lengths, giving Moreau his second training win of the night.

The owners are Jeff Lilley, Christina Lecky, Blair McGlauchlan, and Ian Macdonald. All four owners are from down east. Bettim Again paid just \$2.90.

The next race, a \$15,000 trot, saw Filion again steering a favourite as Hope So went off at 4-5 and that three year old filly delivered Filion's fourth win of the night, getting to the wire in 1:58.1. She is trained by Robert McIntosh, who owns her in partnership with David Boyle and CSX Stables. Hope So was worth just \$2.90.

When Filion won the eighth race with the

overwhelming choice, Bluemoon Bayama, he had five winners on the night and the natural hattrick or Pick 3. Bluemoon Bayama offered just 10 cents on the dollar and was not used in the stretch, winning this \$15,000 pace in 1:53.4. He is trained by Jean Tourigny and owned by Bayama Farms, but what can you do with a \$2.20 mutuel? The all-Filion Pick 3 was not much more luxurious; a \$1 bet got cashed for \$4.85.

After five well-bet favourites, Filion finally scored with a bit of a price. Zig Zag, a five year-old gelding was 4-1 in the \$34,000 Preferred Trot and Filion had him charging late to get the win by a head in 1:52.3. Zig Zag is owned by his trainer Baillargeon along with Claude Hamel, Richard Thompson, and Santo Vena. That \$10.40 win price was the best payoff of Filion's six-bagger and his second straight Pick 3 – coincidentally all from post 6 – was worth \$15.20 for a \$1 investment.

Filion has won six races on the same card before. In fact, he is the last Mohawk driver to do this, back on July 17, 2019. Earlier that same year, both Bob McClure and Doug McNair also scored six wins on a singled card.

No Lasix for Woodbine's "Win and You're In" races

By Jamie Dykstra

Woodbine Entertainment has agreed to prohibit the use of race day Lasix for participants in its three scheduled Breeders' Cup "Win And You're In Races" in 2021. This was pretty well determined on February 10 when the Breeders' Cup announced that all of the "Win and You're In" (WAYI) Challenge Series races will be run without Lasix.

The \$1 million Ricoh Woodbine Mile on September 18, and the \$400,000 Natalma Stakes (for two year-old fillies) and \$400,000 Summer Stakes (for two year-olds), both on September 19, comprise Woodbine's three Breeders' Cup

WAYI races on the 2021 calendar. The Natalma and the Summer each received significant purse increases from \$250,000 the previous year.

Currently, in Ontario, the use of Lasix is allowed, information that is denoted in racing programs and shared with the public.

"We are proud to participate in the Breeders' Cup WAYI Challenge Series and respect the request of the Breeders' Cup to make these non-Lasix events," said Jim Lawson, CEO, Woodbine Entertainment. "We worked hard with our regulators at both the federal

and provincial level to accommodate this requirement for this year's world-class Challenge Series events at Woodbine. Commitment to the health and safety of our equine athletes and horsepeople remains a top priority for Woodbine Entertainment. We are proud of the highly respected reputation we have earned in the industry in regard to animal welfare, and our willingness to discuss important matters that affect our sport and its participants. We look forward to continuing discussions with our regulators and horsepeople regarding the use of Lasix in horse racing in Ontario."



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2021 EVENTS

2-Year-Old Colt Pace

Gold

Sat, Jul 3 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Fri, Jul 16 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sat, Aug 21 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sat, Sep 4 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sun, Oct 3 Flamboro Downs

Grassroots Series

Fri, Jul 9 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Mon, Jul 19 Grand River Raceway
 Mon, Aug 16 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sun, Sep 5 Clinton Raceway
 Fri, Sep 17 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Thurs, Sep 30 Woodbine Mohawk Park (RE)*

2-Year-Old Colt Trot

Gold

Thur, Jul 8 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Thur, Jul 29 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Thur, Aug 19 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sat, Sep 18 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sun, Oct 3 Flamboro Downs

Grassroots Series

Thur, Jul 15 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sat, Jul 31 Hiawatha Horse Park
 Sat, Aug 7 Kawartha Downs
 Mon, Sep 6 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Mon, Sep 13 Grand River Raceway
 Thurs, Sep 30 Woodbine Mohawk Park (RE)*

2-Year-Old Filly Pace

Gold

Fri, Jul 2 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Tues, Jul 13 Georgian Downs
 Tues, Aug 17 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Fri, Sep 3 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sat, Oct 2 Woodbine Mohawk Park

Grassroots Series

Tues, Jul 6 Georgian Downs
 Fri, Jul 23 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Fri, Aug 13 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sat, Sep 4 Hanover Raceway
 Mon, Sep 20 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Thurs, Sep 30 Woodbine Mohawk Park (RE)*

2-Year-Old Filly Trot

Gold

Tues, Jul 6 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Wed, Jul 28 Grand River Raceway
 Fri, Aug 20 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sun, Sep 19 Flamboro Downs
 Mon, Oct 4 Woodbine Mohawk Park

Grassroots Series

Tues, Jul 13 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Tues, Aug 3 Georgian Downs
 Sat, Aug 14 Hanover Raceway
 Sat, Sep 11 Flamboro Downs
 Mon, Sep 20 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Thurs, Sep 30 Woodbine Mohawk Park (RE)*

3-Year-Old Colt Pace

Gold

Sat, May 22 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sun, Jul 4 Georgian Downs
 Sat, Aug 7 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sat, Aug 28 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sat, Sep 25 Woodbine Mohawk Park

Grassroots Series

Sun, May 23 Flamboro Downs
 Mon, Jun 28 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Mon, Aug 2 Dresden Raceway
 Tues, Aug 31 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Tues, Sep 14 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Fri, Oct 1 Woodbine Mohawk Park (RE)*

3-Year-Old Colt Trot

Gold

Fri, May 28 The Raceway at Western Fair
 Sat, Jun 26 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sun, Jul 11 Rideau Carleton Raceway
 Mon, Aug 23 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Mon, Sep 27 Woodbine Mohawk Park

Grassroots Series

Sat, May 29 Hiawatha Horse Park
 Tues, Jun 29 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sun, Jul 11 Rideau Carleton Raceway
 Tues, Aug 24 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Tues, Sep 21 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Fri, Oct 1 Woodbine Mohawk Park (RE)*

3-Year-Old Filly Pace

Gold

Fri, Jun 4 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Mon, Jul 5 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Mon, Aug 2 Grand River Raceway
 Sun, Aug 29 Rideau Carleton Raceway
 Fri, Sep 24 Woodbine Mohawk Park

Grassroots Series

Mon, May 31 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Mon, Jul 12 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Mon, Aug 2 Grand River Raceway
 Sun, Aug 29 Rideau Carleton Raceway
 Fri, Sep 17 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Fri, Oct 1 Woodbine Mohawk Park (RE)*

3-Year-Old Filly Trot

Gold

Tues, Jun 8 Georgian Downs
 Thur, Jul 1 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Fri, Aug 6 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Wed, Aug 25 Grand River Raceway
 Tues, Sep 28 Woodbine Mohawk Park

Grassroots Series

Thur, Jun 3 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Sun, Jul 4 Clinton Raceway
 Fri, Jul 16 Grand River Raceway
 Mon, Aug 30 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Tues, Sep 21 Woodbine Mohawk Park
 Fri, Oct 1 Woodbine Mohawk Park (RE)*

*Grassroots Semi-Finals.

Sat. October 9
GRASSROOTS CHAMPIONSHIPS
 Woodbine Mohawk Park

Sat. October 16
GOLD SUPER FINALS
 Woodbine Mohawk Park



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Derby Preps

\$770,000 Curlin Florida Derby, Gulfstream, Mile and an 8th, March 27:

There were two story lines – Greatest Honour had a shot to become the first horse to sweep the Holy Bull, Fountain of Youth, and Florida Derby. José Ortiz rode Greatest Honour who went off at 4-5. José's brother, Irad, came into the race with 137 wins at the Gulfstream meet and needed one more to break the existing record. Irad was aboard Known Agenda who got the better trip, saving ground down the backstretch and accelerating three-wide into the stretch to pull clear for the 2¾ length victory in 1:49.45. Greatest Honour, mired in traffic for most of the race, was a late-running third. Todd Pletcher is the winning trainer for the St. Elias Stable. Known Agenda has won half of his six races and he returned \$12.80.

\$750,000 UAE Derby, Meydan, Mile and 3/16ths, March 27:



Rebel Romance won the UAE Derby

Rebel Romance (William Buick) ran a lovely race, powering up in the middle of the track in the last furlong to overhaul Panadol in 1:56.28. Rebel Romance is owned by Godolphin and he generated a \$26.10 win ticket. We issue the following warning for anyone considering Rebel Romance in the Kentucky Derby. Of the previous 21 UAE Derbys, not a single winner has even hit the board in any of the subsequent Run for the Roses.

\$750,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks, Turfway Park, Mile and an 8th, March 27:



Like the King sizzled in the Jeff Ruby Steaks

Tarantino was installed as the 5-2 choice in the field of eleven, but after a bobbling start, he trailed throughout. The Canadian-bred Gretzky The Great, rated highly in the Queen's Plate future book, led early for Chris Landeros, but wilted after a mile to finish fifth. Late in the game, it was Like the King (Drayden Van Dyke) storming down the middle of the track from off-the-pace to win by a length. That was Like the King's third win in six starts and he has never missed the board. He is owned by the M Racing Group and trained by Wesley Ward. He paid \$16.

\$1,000,000 Louisiana Derby, Fairgrounds, Mile and 3/16ths, March 29:

This race was the first to offer 100 Kentucky Derby points to the winner. It was the 108th version of this

race, but only the second time at a mile and 3/16ths. The crowd installed Mandalou and Florent Geroux as the 6-5 favourite, but that one flopped, and finished a well-beaten sixth. The winner was Hot Rod Charlie, ridden by Joel Rosario. Rosario put his horse on the lead early in the race and they cut out solid fractions of :47.05, 1:11.25, and 1:36.38. In the stretch, Hot Rod Charlie had no serious challenge and he won by 2 lengths in 1:55.06, a track record for the distance of a mile and 3/16^{ths}. The horse is trained by Leandro Mora for Roadrunner Racing Boat Racing and William Strauss, and as the second choice, Hot Rod Charlie paid \$7.80.

\$1,000,000 Rebel Stakes, Oaklawn Park, Mile and a 16th, March 13:



Concert Tour rocked 'em at Oaklawn

Coady Photography

This race is apparently dead centre in Bob Baffert's comfort zone. He saddled Mary and Gary West's unbeaten Concert Tour and, under Joel Rosario, Concert Tour went off as the 8-5 favourite. That was fully justified – Concert Tour went right to the top, cut out professional splits of :47.53, 1:12, and 1:36.65 for the mile. In the stretch, Concert Tour galloped away from any trouble, winning by 4½ lengths in 1:43.18. Now 3 for 3 in his career, Concert Tour paid \$5.40.

\$300,000 Gotham Stakes, Aqueduct, One Mile, March 6:

Oh Canada! Weyburn, owned and bred by Chiefswood Stables, was completely overlooked by the bettors, going off at 46-1 with Trevor McCarthy in the saddle. The favourite at 4-5 was Highly Motivated (Javier Castellano) but if you were highly motivated to bet the invader from north of the border, you were richly rewarded. Weyburn raced near the front from the start and when Crowded Trade (Eric Cancel) came to call in mid-stretch, Weyburn refused to quit; the two horses hit the wire almost simultaneously; in the photo, it was Weyburn by a nose. Weyburn is by Pioneerof the Nile out of the Chiefswood mare, Sunday Affair, and certainly appears to be a horse on the improve. His first race was a fifth place finish at Belmont in October, followed by a bright second at 14-1 in a maiden special weight in November. On December 5, he scored nicely as even-money favourite over 7 furlongs, and his win in the Gotham makes him 2 for 4. Trained by James Jerkins, Weyburn produced a \$96.50 win ticket.

\$400,000 Tampa Bay Derby, Tampa Bay, Mile and a 16th, March 6:

Candy Man Rocket went off as the 8-5 favourite, but that rocket fizzled, coming eleventh in the 12-horse field. The first two horses came from far back. Helium and

José Ferrer were tenth down the backstretch, but started accelerating with a five-wide move around the far turn. In the stretch, Helium found the front and was able to repel the late move of Hidden Stash (Rafael Bejarano) to win by three quarters of a length. Helium is trained by Mark Casse for D. J. Stable and was the second horse with a Canadian back story to win a Derby prep that Saturday. His two previous races were in Canada. Both were wins, including the \$100,000 Display Stakes under Emma-Jayne Wilson. \$32.80 is a wonderful price for a horse that has not lost in 3 starts.

\$300,000 San Felipe Stakes, Santa Anita, Mile and a 16th, March 6

No one got rich betting this Derby Prep. The unbeaten Life is Good, ridden by veteran Mike Smith, was 1-2 on the board and he ran exactly like a 1-2 shot should. Smith put Life is Good on the lead, and carved out intimidating fractions of :45.83, 1:10.55, and 1:35.46 for the mile. Life is Good was ahead by 5 coming into the stretch and he just kept increasing his advantage. It was 8 lengths at the wire and the time of 1:42.18 is the fastest mile and a 16th by any Kentucky Derby hopeful so far. The winning trainer is Bob Baffert, the owner is Winstar Stable, and the payoff was just \$3.

\$750,000 Wood Memorial, Aqueduct, Mile and an 8th, April 3:



The longest shot won!

Adam Coglianese Photo

On a card in which Irad Ortiz won six races, this is one he did not get. He was on the 2-1 favourite, Risk Taking, who finished a non-interested seventh. The risk taking was all about Bourbonic. Under Kendrick Carmouche, Bourbonic, who had already won twice at this track, went off at 72-1, was dead last entering the stretch, then exploded past nine rivals to win by a head over Dynamic One (José Ortiz) who was 15-1. The time of 1:54.49 was exceptionally slow for 9 furlongs, but those holding winning vouchers didn't care. The \$2 win ticket paid \$146.50. Bourbonic is trained by Todd Pletcher and owned by Calumet Farm.

\$800,000 Blue Grass Stakes, Keeneland, Mile and an 8th, April 3:



Essential Quality still perfect

Essential Quality, unbeaten in his first four races, went off at 1-2 against eight rivals and he had to work for it. With rider Luis Saez pumping away, Essential Quality needed the entire stretch to squeeze past a stubborn Highly Motivated (Javier Castellano). Time for the 9 furlongs was 1:48.50, less than a second off the course record. Now 5 for 5, Essential Quality is trained by Brad Cox for Godolphin and the win price was just \$3.

\$752,000 Santa Anita Derby, Santa Anita, Mile and an 8th, April 3:



This one had a field of nine, but from the top of the stretch, only two mattered. Rock Your World led the 4-5 favourite, Medina Spirit, into the final eighth and was just too strong, winning by 4¼ lengths in 1:49.17. The win makes Rock Your World unbeaten in three races and he paid \$12.40. John Sadler trains for Hronis Racing and Talla Racing.

\$200,000 Lexington Stakes, Keeneland, Mile and a 16th, April 10



The favourites did not factor in this race, run in the slop and for the first half-mile, too fast. Noble Reflection (Javier Castellano) fired off the first 4 furlongs in :45.87 and that spelled doom both for that horse and the 2-1 choice, Swiftsure (Irad Ortiz) who surely went too swift, a length behind the leader early. The late-comers swarmed up in the final half-mile and it was King Fury and Brian Hernandez rallying from seventh, pulling away in the final 50 yards to win by 2¾ lengths in 1:43.50. Trained by Ken McPeck, King Fury won for the third time in six tries so the \$38.40 win ticket was very attractive. He is owned by Four Circle Stables and Three Chimney Farms. King Fury earned just 20 Derby points which leaves him tied for 24th in the standings.

\$1,000,000 Arkansas Derby, Oaklawn Park, Mile and an 8th, April 10



This race also produced an upset. The 1-5 favourite was the undefeated Concert Tour (Joel Rosario), but after dueling for a mile with Caddo River (Florent Geroux), Concert Tour came up flat in the stretch. Super Stock got a smart ride from Ricardo Santana, came into the stretch 2 lengths behind in third and had all the momentum, blowing past the two embattled leaders and winning by 2½ lengths in 1:50.92. Just his second win in eight races, but Super Stock has four other in-the-money finishers for trainer Steve Asmussen and his owners Keith Asmussen and Erv Woolsey. Super Stock earned 100 points for the Kentucky Derby. Those who bet him earned \$26.40 for each \$2 win ticket.

Kentucky Derby Points



Horse	Points	Trainer
1) Essential Quality	140	Brad Cox
2) Hot Rod Charlie	110	Doug O'Neill
3) Super Stock	109	Steve Asmussen
4) Like the King	104	Wesley Ward
5) Known Agenda	102	Todd Pletcher
6) Rock Your World	100	John Sadler
7) Bourbonic	100	Todd Pletcher
8) Medina Spirit	74	Bob Baffert
9) Concert Tour	70	Bob Baffert
10) Midnight Bourbon	66	Steve Asmussen
11) Weyburn	60	Jimmy Jerkens
12) Mandaloun	52	Brad Cox
13) Caddo River	50	Brad Cox
14) Highly Motivated	50	Chad Brown
15) Helium	50	Mark Casse
16) Panadol	40	Salem bin Chadayer
17) Soup and Sandwich	40	Mark Casse
18) Dynamic One	40	Todd Pletcher
19) Crowded Trade	40	Chad Brown
20) Sainthood	40	Todd Pletcher
21) Proxy	36	Michael Stidham
22) Rombauer	36	Michael McCarthy
23) Hidden Stash	32	Victoria Oliver
24) Dream Shake	30	Peter Eurton
25) O Besos	25	Gregory Foley
26) Get Her Number	20	Peter Miller
27) Hozier	20	Bob Baffert
28) King Fury	20	Ken McPeck
29) Hockey Dad	20	Doug O'Neill



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History in the Grand National



Rachael Blackmore, a 31 year-old Irish jockey, rode 11-1 shot Minella Times to a rousing victory in the 173rd Grand National at Aintree on April 10. In doing so, she became the first woman to ride into the winners circle in England's longest and

most prestigious race.

The Grand National is as gruelling as it gets – a 4¼ mile race over 30 fences and this year's edition had a field of 40 horses.

Blackmore came into the race just after winning 6 times at the Cheltenham Festival in March which made her the first female to be the meet's leading rider.

She proved that was no fluke by giving the eight year-old Minella Times an ideal journey, although she emphasized post race just how powerful her horse was.

"I got a fantastic passage all the way through the race," the exhilarated jockey said. "Minella Times jumped fantastically. I don't think he missed a beat. You couldn't wish for a better passage through a race. He was just unbelievable. His jumping was second to none. I am so lucky to be riding these horses for Henry de Bromhead."

What the trainer de Bromhead did is almost as historic as Blackmore's feat. He watched his stronger horse, Minella Times, win with authority and Balko des Flos, the other horse he entered, came second at

odds of 149-1. Let's hope that de Bromhead backs his own horses because the 35-16 exactor paid \$2,053.

When asked about the significance of her being the first woman to win the Grand National, Blackmore danced around the answer.

"I don't feel male or female right now. I don't even feel human," she said. "It's a massive day for me personally. I don't know how to put that big deal into words. I'm just delighted to win the Grand National."

Minella Times was one of seven horses in the race owned by JP McManus. British commentators hoped the victory would be a sort of balm for the billionaire, whose 40 year-old daughter died at the end of December while on a family vacation in Barbados.

Due to Covid protocols, there were no spectators at Aintree to witness the precedent making accomplishment. However, a sizeable gathering of jockeys, trainers, and owners who were allowed on the grounds cheered the jockey and her winning horse as the pair were guided into the winners enclosure.

The lockdown and thestable.ca



Of all the operations that had to reconsider their blueprint when the government ordered horse racing to cease, the stable.ca, run by Anthony and Amy MacDonald arguably endured the biggest headache.

"We're the biggest stable in Canada," Anthony told **Down The Stretch** while driving a horse to the border on April 14. We've got 121 horses."

Not only is that a huge number, but virtually each of those horses has several owners. Every one of them wants them to be racing somewhere and, in April, that somewhere was not Ontario.

"I think this lockdown is upsetting everybody," says MacDonald. "I've been pretty critical of this government and pretty critical of the federal government, both on social media and in videos for my clients. We're all upset that so many people are being left behind while other ones aren't. It infuriates me when I hear our politicians use catch phrases and buzzwords and think that they're going to fool anybody. The perfect example is Premier Ford talking about 'following the science'. I just don't know what science he is following because he's leaving sporting events like the NHL to be open, which is fine. I don't have a problem with that. But I do have a problem when we have horse racing with an impeccable safety record when it comes to the pandemic and there's not a second glance, just shut them down. It just seems to me he's following his science, not *the* science."

MacDonald scoffs at the theory that there's no way to know if conducting horse racing is a safe thing to do.

"Well, there absolutely is," he states firmly. "Every other jurisdiction in North America has not shut down again since the first pandemic. Yet we're in the middle of our third shut down. So, the science is absolutely right there in front of everybody. For Ford to say the science isn't there is simply lies and I don't believe it."

The scary thing for horse racing in Ontario is the

fact that if horses don't race, the financial pyramid that affects thousands collapse. Like many other horse people, MacDonald needed to find places to run his horses.

"Right now, 65% of our horses in Ontario are gone," says MacDonald. "They're in Ohio on the backstretch at Northfield Park, or at The Meadows, or in the Meadowlands, or in Saratoga, New York or Pennsylvania."

MacDonald spoke with **Down The Stretch** on Thursday, April 14 as he was transporting a horse for a place to race.

"I have one literally on the back of this truck and trailer right now," he said over his phone. "I'm on my way to the border to go to Ohio tonight to race. I have a horse on the back of the trailer with me."

Thestable.ca would much prefer to be racing at Mohawk or some of the smaller tracks in Ontario. The lockdown gives them no options. The obligation is to his many investors.

"I'm not saying that we deserve special treatment," states MacDonald. "There are so many businesses that have been shuttered closed and unfortunately never going to open again. I can't nor will I pretend to tell Premier Ford what to do, but I do run my stable and I do run my family with my wife, and we're making decisions for us. Not for Doug Ford."

Camilla's first winner came quickly



On October 5, 1989 in his first professional shift with the Buffalo Sabres, twenty year-old Alexander Mogilny scored with his first shot on goal.

On August 7, 2010, in his first at bat in the Major Leagues, the Blue Jays' J. P. Arencibia smacked the first pitch he saw for a home run.

And that brings us to Camilla Christoforou. She got her trainer's licence at the beginning of March this year and the first horse she sent out at Mohawk was the seven year-

old trotter, Kameran Hanover, for the sixth race on March 8. With Camilla's husband, Chris, steering, Kameran Hanover got a perfect trip, hugged the rail for most of the race, and found room in the stretch to overhaul the leaders to win in 1:55.3. Kameran Hanover was 25-1 and Camilla was almost as surprised as the bettors.

"I never expected that would happen going into the race," she says. "I was hoping we could get a good check because he was in pretty tough."

It's defying the odds for a trainer to win the first time out, but Camilla got progressively more optimistic as the race went on.

"I was very happy getting away third. And he stayed in there, just following at the half. I was pleased that he stayed on the rail the whole way and through the last turn and I was hoping that it was going to open up for him and, when it did, that's when I really thought *Oh, my gosh. Is he going to get there in time?*"

Kameran Hanover did, winning 1¼ lengths for the sixteenth win in his 111th start and paying \$53.70.

Camilla is from Norway and has been working with horses since her early teens. She was a groom when she met Chris and they have been married since 2007. The couple have a thirteen year-old son, Niklas and a five year-old daughter, Mia.

Camilla sure married into a harness racing intense family. Chris has a formidable driving history – 30 years in the bike, over 6,600 wins, earnings of more than \$115 million. And Camilla's father-in-law, Charalambos, has training lines that go back to 1984. Horses sent out by Charalambos have earned in excess of \$12 million.

It just made sense that Camilla would wade deeper into the water.

"I took the trainers' test back in October," she says. "But because of the COVID, I didn't get my license until March."

Winning her first start was certainly a great moment for Camilla, but the outcome was tinged with sadness.

"It was special and emotional," she says. "I was very happy I could win my first race with my father-in-law's horse and long-time partner Irving Storfer, but the sad part about it was that the third owner, Caroline Polillo, passed away very unexpected the week before the race. Caroline was a close, long time friend of the family so it was very emotional on top of everything."

In every aspect of horse racing, it's much easier to lose than to win. Camilla got a little dose of reality just three races after the Kameran Hanover win. Her second entry was the four year-old trotter, Only for Justice, and in this \$28,000 race he finished fifth. Not that Camilla was dismayed.

"He's a nice horse," she says. "It was only his second start, so we knew we have to race him a couple of times before he's going to get fit enough. I was very happy with him finishing fifth. I thought he was good."

There is the interesting dynamic of Camilla training horses that her husband is driving. Does she give him advice before he takes the horses onto the track?

"No," she laughs. "I trust him 110%. He knows what he's doing. He's always careful with the horses. He gives them good drives."

Cox trains a winner at Gulfstream



Tidal Forces won first time out

Adam Coglianese Photo

That was a very impressive win by the three year-old Tidal Forces in the seventh race at Gulfstream on April 10. It was a maiden special weight with a purse of \$47,000 at a mile and an eighth on the grass and that's a challenging distance for a first-timer like Tidal Forces. However, under a fine ride from Paco Lopez, Tidal Forces was always in contention, stalked the leader most of the way, and found the wire just in time, winning by a nose in 1:49.20. The son of Malibu Moon is trained by Woodbine regular, Gail Cox, and is owned by Sam-Son Farm, which still has some fine racehorses despite selling off a lot of its stock recently. Because he was racing for the first time, Tidal Forces went off at 13-1 and paid \$29.40. Cox is having an excellent time at Gulfstream. That was her second winner in 12 races and her horses have also finished second two times, and third four times.

Sutherland is still winning races



The career of jockey Chantal Sutherland has a fascinating arc to it. On Sunday, April 4, Sutherland was aboard the three year-old filly Mona Stella in a \$47,000 allowance race at Gulfstream. It was 7½ furlongs on the grass and she gave the filly a perfect ride, getting to the lead at the head of the stretch, and pulling away to win by almost 3 lengths for trainer Patrick Biancone. It was her first win in six mounts at Gulfstream this spring. And there is a romantic element that brought Sutherland to south Florida.

"I've been riding in Kentucky and my partner is Corey

Lanerrie and he rode in Florida for the winter," she says. "I didn't commit to riding in Florida for the winter in December. Because of COVID you cannot have a jock's license if you're going to be on the back side, so I decided to take out an exercise license and work for Kenny McPeck. I breezed horses and just enjoyed my winter."

When it was possible to get her license, Sutherland hooked up with a good agent.

"His name is John Salamone and we're working together," she says. "I know a lot of people here in Florida, and it was just an opportunity to get going again."

The local news station in Miami, Channel 7 thought Sutherland was interesting enough to do a feature on her. They pointed out that she's 45, which she countered by emphasizing how fit she is. Part of the report showed her boxing against a weight bag in a gym.

"I've been riding horses and getting on as many as ten works as a day every day for Kenny McPeck," she says. "And I still train and I have always been super healthy. If you stay fit, it's like riding a bicycle. It doesn't go away."

Sutherland begrudgingly gives an answer to the question about being a professional rider in her 40s.

"I don't have kids," she says. "A lot of women my age have kids so it's a different dynamic for a woman to be in the sport. Men don't have that issue and there aren't a lot of women in the game because, at this stage, they probably have families. I'm not in that situation and I've always kept myself fit, and I have a lot of experience and I really am grateful to have that. There's always new kids coming in and it's a revolving door. That's our industry."

Sutherland prefers that the conversation tilts towards the basic reasons that she's still riding.

"What I'd like you to highlight is my happiness and eagerness to be a jockey and to be in the industry. I love the industry and I'm just changing tack from Kentucky to Florida."

And that change from Kentucky to Florida is reaping rewards. On April 15, Sutherland was on Unprecedented, a four year-old gelding, off at 9-2 in a \$12,500 claim race at 5 ½ furlongs. Unprecedented was rated perfectly, stalking the front runner from 3rd, moving up in the middle of the track in the stretch and going by easily to win by 2 ¼ lengths in 1:05.24. Unprecedented is owned by Philip DiCosmo and trained by Frank Russo and he paid \$11 to win.



It is not Unprecedented for Chantal Sutherland to win

Adam Coglianese Photo



WOODBINE

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There is the essential gamble in owning thoroughbred horses, but 35 year-old Dale Desruisseaux went a little further out on a limb than most. He was operating a profitable pizza restaurant in his home town of Smithville. He started doing this when he was 18, even though at the time, he did own a horse. A horse with a cool name.

"We called her Trajecly Hipp," says Desruisseaux. "She was by Trajectory out of Hippocritical. She only ran twice; in her second start, she hurt herself and never ran again."

Despite the fact that the pizza business was bringing in dough, Desruisseaux had a deep-seated urge for a bigger slice of excitement.

"We were doing really well with the restaurant," he says. "And some guy came in and offered to buy me out of the restaurant. I saw the cheque in front of me and said, 'Okay, let's go ahead.'"

In 2011, he obtained his trainer's licence and, in 2014, claimed Bear's Romeo.

"We claimed Bear's Romeo in July 2014 for \$10,000," he says. "We did ok on that."

Less than a year later, Bear's Romeo was claimed for \$12,500 by Angus Buntain. In the 10 races that Bear's Romeo ran for Desruisseaux, he won twice and hit the board on five occasions.

Then there was the sweet but ultimately bitter experience with a horse named Eminent Force that was claimed in June 2017 for \$30,000. Just 17 days after that claim, Eminent Force won a \$45,000 race, and 25 days after that, he carried Jesse Campbell to a half-length win at a mile and a sixteenth on the grass. It was a \$62,500 claim race and the winner's share was \$37,380. Desruisseaux got much more than that. Eminent Force was taken out of that heat by trainer Catherine Day Phillips.

One filly worth watching in 2021 is a three year-old named Dictate, a daughter of Hard Spun.

"I'm not saying she's going to be a superstar or anything, but I think she has a decent future. My wife and I were at Keeneland's January sale and I actually I didn't even really see her at first," he says. "My wife kicked me in the shin and said I needed to go look at this one. So, I looked at her and took a shot. We only paid \$4,000 and since my partners have been good to me, I asked my one partner Peter de Salvo if he wanted a piece of her, and he said 'yes'. It took a little while to get her to the races but she ran a pretty bang-up race in her second start, so she seems to have a promising future."

That second start for Dictate was at a mile and a sixteenth with Emma-Jayne Wilson riding, and Dictate led all the way and managed to hang on for the win by a



Dale Desruisseaux, Jennette, Dawson and Daynica

head in the good time of 1:44.09. That produced an \$11.60 win ticket and the owners' share was \$20,000.

There's also a colt called Working The Table. That's an appropriate name, considering that his owner used to serve pizzas to hungry people.

"Yeah, he's a decent little horse," says Desruisseaux. "We might have been a little bit too optimistic with him early as a two year-old when he was showing a lot of speed and some talent. Ran him in the Stakes the first time out and he ran fourth. Second time around he was in maiden special weight. He got a little tired down the lane and ran third, but he was beaten by a couple of nice horses. He's breezing. He should be able to run whenever we are running."

Breathlessnthesand sounds like an offspring of the great pacer, Somebeachsomewhere, but he's actually a son of Ami's Holiday and cost just \$4,000.

"We didn't name him," laughs Desruisseaux. "I think he's a nice horse. That new Ontario Sires Stakes program for three year-olds - I'm hoping to get a piece of that. I ran him first time out. I knew he would be short, but I wanted to get a race into him."

Desruisseaux entered Breathlessnthesand in the \$250,000 Simcoe Stakes. It was just the colt's second start and he suffered a long outside trip under a frustrated Luis Contreras, which led to a sixth place finish.

"If you watch the race, he's ten-wide if not more, the whole way," says Desruisseaux. "The jock came back and he's pretty mad that he didn't have a good trip. I'm not saying we would have won the race, but he definitely would have hit the board."

Of the eleven horses that he owns or shares ownership in, Desruisseaux is looking forward to the progress of at least six two year-olds.

"I've got one in Florida right now. Her name is Fun Cool. Hopefully she'll be coming up soon. I've got another Giant Gizmo filly I really like. Her name is Swinging Mandy. She just started training, but she looks

promising. She's doing everything professional."

That Dale Desruisseaux would end up full-time as a thoroughbred trainer-owner seems inevitable. In fact, he met his wife, Jennette, at the track.

"I met her when I was at Fort Erie Racetrack," he says. "She was a security guard there. Her father is Robert Warner, a trainer at Fort Erie."

Desruisseaux likes to work the letter 'D' into his stable and his family. His stable logo has the Double D logo with a background of hunter green and he has named his two children Dawson and Daynica. We wondered if Dale and Jennette created half a dozen more, would all their names begin with 'D'?

"No that's it!" he exclaims. "We're done."

We like to ask our Owners of the Month to recall their most thrilling moments in horse racing. Desruisseaux goes back to his first training win, a maiden race at Fort Erie almost ten years ago.

"I had a horse called Cox's Event and he won," says Desruisseaux. "What made it unforgettable was that it was not only my first win but my dad, Allen, trained Paul Bunyan, the horse that came second."

When asked if his foray into thoroughbreds has been as reliably profitable as his previous adventure making pizzas, Desruisseaux dances around the answer. Easy to understand - horse racing comes with no guarantee. The important thing is, this enterprise fits his personality much better.

"I like the grind, every day. I'm not the kind of guy who can sit at home and do nothing," he says. "I like being active. I couldn't do a 9 to 5 office job. It's the rush. It's an addiction pretty much. You train the horse, you find the little things that make the horse happier to run better, and then the ultimate goal is winning races. I like the process and task in developing the younger horses. Everything that goes into the daily grind of training these horses and ending up in the winners circle, there is no other thrill like it."



It was in February 2010 that **Down the Stretch** started its Owners of the Month features. At the time, David Willmot was the CEO of Woodbine and he 'suggested' that if our newspaper wanted to siphon funds from the big company, it should give props to the people who make the biggest gambles in the sport – the owners. Since then, we have profiled many of the dominant players, the Stakes winners, and the people who throw the most cash into the sport. But sometimes, we need to get ahead of the curve and identify someone who might conquer huge mountains in the future.

When the four year-old Halliday Dream broke his maiden on March 18 in a \$15,000 trot at Mohawk, it was the first training win for 30 year-old Kyle Ruhl, who also owns the gelded son of Angus Hall. Ruhl is brilliantly bred on both sides to prosper in the harness game. His father, Paul, was a driver and trainer as far back as the early 70s and his uncle, Jim, also dabbled in both training and driving. The most impressive bloodlines come from his mother, Christina, who is the daughter of the great Montreal Canadian forward, John Ferguson.

Ferguson was a force in harness racing. Among his many standardbreds was Merger, who won the 1982 Little Brown Jug. After his hockey career, Ferguson became the President and CEO of Windsor Raceway. Although Ferguson passed away in 2007, Ruhl has vivid memories of his grandfather.

"I just remember whenever we would go to the track with him, especially at Windsor Raceway, it was basically him shaking everybody's hands," says Ruhl. "Everybody wanted to talk to him."

Ruhl is 30, and though he just got his trainer's licence last December, it's not as if he's a raw rookie in the sport.

"I was always working with the horses with my dad," he says. "I was mucking stalls when I was 11 or 12. I was jogging them every day in the summers. When I was 19, we had a couple together when he was still showing me the ropes. I owned a horse with Anthony McDonald's The Stable.ca and I got back into training last year when my uncle Jim bought a couple."

Ruhl actually owned his first horse when he was 19.

"That horse's name was Fagagna Jupiter," he says. "He was a trotter. We had a little bit of success with him and then we ended up selling them a few months later. And then, in 2018, I bought 10% of a horse named Screaming Hawk through TheStable.ca with Anthony McDonald. He was also an Angus Hall."

Ruhl admits that he prefers trotters.



Kyle in the lap of his father Paul, after dad won a race at Hazel Park for father-in-law John Ferguson

"My grandpa, my dad's dad, Harvey Ruhl always had trotters. It's not that I don't see myself owning a pacer at any point, but with trotters, it's not as watered down. It seems to me if you get a good gaited trotter and you can keep them fit every week, you're going to get checks."

It was through his uncle, Jim Ruhl, that Kyle got



It was always in Kyle Ruhl's genes

connected with Halliday Dream.

"My uncle had him with Isabelle Darveau" he says. "She had him for five starts and wasn't getting much luck. The best result was a third with him at Grand River. My uncle was retiring from owning horses and I talked to him and said, 'You know, maybe I can get Halliday going', so I bought him for \$20,000 off my uncle in September."

The big problem for Halliday Dream was his tendency to break stride.

"For some reason, coming out of the last turn at Mohawk seemed to be his kryptonite because when Isabelle had him, he broke into a run at that spot twice," says Ruhl. "And

then my first or second start at Mohawk, he made a break at that turn. When we came back to qualify him with Bob McClure, he said the same thing, that coming out of the turn he would get a little rough."

On the night of Halliday Dream's maiden breaking win, that Mohawk turn was a huge part of Ruhl's tough process.

"Don't run," he says. "It's all I kept saying, *Don't freaking run*. I was standing about as close to the track as you could get from the paddock and I never took my eyes off him, just watching his gait, making sure he was good and strong. And you know, he kicked home down the stretch. When he was over halfway down the stretch, it was a relief. That's what it was."

There's a great fraternity of people involved in harness racing. On the track, they might do everything possible to beat you. But when the race is over, a guy's first win is worth celebrating.

"I got quite a few high fives in the paddock," says Ruhl. "Scott Young gave me one. James McDonald and Paul McDonnell came up to me and congratulated me, so that was pretty cool. That's nice of them."

Asked to recall his most thrilling moment in harness racing, Ruhl has instant recall.

"It was the first year I was working full time in the barn. I was 11 or 12 years old. I was working for a trainer named Frank O'Reilly. We had a three year-old trotting filly named Very Violet. She won the Dream Of Glory Stakes at Hanover. It was a very surreal moment."

So what is it about harness racing that Ruhl likes the best?

"Winning," he says, with a laugh. "I'm a very competitive person. I played competitive hockey until I was 23 at the University of Guelph. It's just the glory that comes with winning."

A review of: Win, Place, Show; 50 years a Woodbine Teller,

By Brian Henderson

This is kind of tricky, writing a review of **Win, Place, Show; 50 years a Woodbine Teller** by Brian Henderson. First of all, we need to appreciate that Henderson does not billboard himself as a writer.

"I was a math major in college," he says. "Not in English."

So, if you're looking for the kind of poetry that Laura Hillebrand imparted to Seabiscuit or the page-turning drama of every Dick Francis novel, this might not be for you.

However, there are some terrific moments in Henderson's book. It's a reflection of an era long behind us – he chats us chronologically through his experiences selling and cashing tickets at Ontario racetracks as far back as the 60s.

Along the way are multiple anecdotes about golf, brawls, poker playing, skiing, picking up women, going places in beat-up cars, and getting on junkets to Vegas.

Some of the tales tend to wander off with no definitive end point, but Henderson is at his most interesting when he's recalling the way horses were played so many years ago. His storytelling is rich with Damon Runyon-esque characters – names like Doggie, Tubbie, Pop Bottle, Scrooge, JP, The Good Sheppard, Piggy Stein, the Geek, the Arab, Bubba, Ziggy, Heinz, Colombo, and of course, Subway Elvis.

Henderson's history at racetracks goes back to an era when, after each race, the payoffs were calculated by an individual scratching out the math with a pencil and sheet of paper. His biggest gripe, which he addresses a few times in his book, is that the ticket sellers and not the racetrack were held accountable when a ticket was mistakenly punched. He tells an appalling story concerning the heavy better known as Subway Elvis.

In December, 2000, the OJC added the Superfecta to the betting menu. Subway decided to play every possible combination in a 14-horse race – a \$24,024 ticket. The clerk who took the bet was Union President Roy Boskett's nephew, Gary. Gary thought the screen said \$2,024. The lighting wasn't very good and Gary missed one of the digits. We were not used to selling \$24,000 tickets. Gary collected \$2,024 from Subway and didn't think any more about the transaction until the next day when he was informed that he was short \$22,000. By the time they caught up with Subway, he was in his comfort zone – broke. The winning superfecta paid less than \$1,000. WEG agreed to eat half the \$22,000. Gary died still paying off the \$11,000.

Throughout the book, Henderson exhibits his superb grasp of every type of wagering. He gets pretty angry when he sees new exotic bets implemented by people who clearly didn't consider all the possibilities. In 1992, Sweep Six betting was approved.

A major flaw existed when the bet was first introduced. There was no fair rule to account for when horses were scratched after betting was closed. In normal races, when a horse is a late scratch, the punter gets his money back. This did not apply in the case of the Sweep Six – the only time a punter was entitled to a refund was if he had the winner in the other 5 races. This was a fiasco waiting to happen. The matter came to a head when a player who had invested a large sum of money chasing a huge jackpot had his horse scratched just before post time for the 6th and final leg. He got \$2 dollars back. Eventually the scratched horse rule was changed so that if your horse got scratched after being closer, you got the betting favourite in its place.

To me, when Henderson writes about the betting and the characters who flush their money away at the windows, he's at his most interesting. Along the way, he drops a few names:

One summer, Avelino Gomez rented the cottage next to ours. He was Canada's best and most colourful jockey. He had a beautiful blonde wife, a baby and big Cadillac. I wondered how he reached the pedals.

Then there was the time in Vegas, golfing behind one of the superstars of the day.

After loading our cart with a few beers, we got to the first tee just in time to see movie star Dean Martin tee off. He topped his ball into the parking lot.

A stunning revelation in Win, Place, Show – something impossible to believe these days with the money sports stars make – is that many of the great hockey players 50 years ago needed summer jobs.

Montreal Canadiens great, Rocket Richard, worked as a seller at Blue Bonnets in Montreal during the off-season. I could just imagine someone trying to stick the Rocket with a \$10 ticket when he was making \$20 a day as a seller. If there are talkers and punchers, The Rocket wasn't a talker.

Henderson attended the big races all over Ontario. His recall of the 1971 Prix D'Ete in Montreal is fascinating.

Next up for Rob Ron Tarios was the Prix D'Ete at Blue Bonnets in Montreal against the best 3 year olds in North America which included Albatross. When the starting gate sped away, Keith Waples sent Rob Ron Tarios to the lead. As Albatross and Tarios raced to the first turn, Albatross glided to the front. Unfortunately, Tarios was travelling too fast to negotiate the turn. He broke stride and the big crowd gasped knowing they were being denied the anticipated showdown.

A melancholy theme in Henderson's book is the life and death of racetracks. He chronicles the opening of Garden City Raceway in 1964 and its demise in 1976. Henderson writes of the end of Greenwood Raceway.

With the closing of Garden City, the end of the Fort Erie summer meet and the sale of Greenwood, the era of the great caravan of horse racing in southern Ontario had come to an end. One can only imagine the number of people who would have frequented a casino at Greenwood had Greenwood remained a track.

Because of his long tenure at the track and his complete grasp of the issues, Henderson spent many years representing the union arguing, often with success, for better wages and conditions. The last quarter of his book documents a lot of the fighting between Woodbine and its mutuel workers; suffice it to say that's all a pretty lost cause now that the self-operated machines have replaced most of the sellers.

Brian Henderson's **Win, Place, Show; 50 Years a Woodbine Teller** covers a lot of ground. There are references to Ron Feagan, the Waples clan, Rudy Pilous, Lloyd Duffy, Arnold Palmer, Moe Norman, Stanley Dancer, even Jack Klugman trying (unsuccessfully) to pick up one of his girlfriends.

There's a lot happening in this book, and if you're prepared to gloss over some of the misadventures that didn't exactly turn into Ocean's 11, you will be amply rewarded. **Win, Place Show** is a valuable time capsule reminding us of a period that can never be duplicated.



Other than at the track, there wasn't much legalized gambling available. Unless you were able to get a ticket on the Irish Sweepstakes on the black market, there were no lotteries. The nearest casinos were in Las Vegas. Churches had the market cornered on bingo. You might find a game of Crown and Anchors at a local charity event. There were no legal off track betting shops. Bookmaking was illegal, but most factories and work places had access to bookies — private entrepreneurs who took bets and generally paid track odds with certain limitations. The only legal place to play the horses was at the track. There wasn't much need for track operators to promote their business. For the most part, all they had to do was open their gates.

For a copy log into
winplaceshow450.ca

Funds for horsepeople



On April 12, Ontario Racing announced that standardbred horsepeople now have the opportunity to access certain purse funds that remain available under the Funding Agreement with Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) as a result of the suspension of live racing in the province as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The aforementioned funds were already committed to the industry through the Funding Agreement for Live Horse Racing between Ontario Racing and OLG.

"We are pleased to be able to provide these equine benefit payments," said John Hayes, Chair, Ontario Racing. "Horse racing, like so many other industries, continues to be severely impacted by the pandemic. The Ontario Racing team, OLG, and industry representatives, remain dedicated to assisting horsepeople and horses across the province. We are grateful for your ongoing support throughout these challenging times."

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ontario Racing created a task force, as it did during the spring lockdown in 2020, to address the financial impacts to standardbred horse racing in Ontario.

Eligibility Requirements:

For horsepeople to be eligible for financial payments for the month of April pursuant to this program, the Standardbred COVID-19 Task Force has determined that horses must meet the criteria outlined below to be eligible to receive an

equine benefit payment.

Horses Drawn into Race Cancellation Payment - \$300 per horse:

Horses entered to race Saturday April 3, 2021 and Sunday April 4, 2021 at Woodbine Mohawk Park, Western Fair, and Rideau Carleton will be awarded the standard \$300 cancellation fee. These races were previously drawn.

April Training Benefit Payment - \$1,000 per horse:

1. Any horse stabled in Ontario with a charted line in Ontario in 2021 and is not currently racing or training/stabled outside of Ontario without returning to Ontario prior to April 5 shall receive \$1,000 in relief funding. No application required.
2. The following horses that are preparing to race and are currently stabled in Ontario for the month of April may be eligible to apply for \$1,000 in relief funding:
 - Unraced in 2021 3- & 4-year-olds
 - Any horse who started in Ontario between September 1 - December 23, 2020 that was stabled in Ontario at the time of the start and remained in Ontario until December 23, 2020

All horses under both criteria must remain in Ontario for the month of April to receive funding and make their first start in Ontario once live racing resumes in Ontario. If a horse qualifies under both criteria, the horse is eligible for only a single \$1,000 payment.

Application form:

Go to OntarioRacing.com; in the search engine type 'applications for payments to horse owners'. The deadline to submit your application to Ontario Racing is Friday, April 23, 2021. All mailed applications must be postmarked by Friday, April 23, 2021 in order to be eligible.

Please email or mail completed applications to:

Attn: Sarrah Young – syoung@ontarioracing.com
Ontario Racing Management
555 Rexdale Boulevard
Toronto, ON M9W 5L2

Important Notes:

- All payments received must be used for the care and maintenance of standardbred horses
- Once racing resumes in Ontario, horses who have received benefits under this program MUST make their first start at an Ontario standardbred racetrack
- Ontario Racing reserves the right to request additional information to ensure all criteria has been met. Those receiving benefit payments under the program could be subject to an audit by Ontario Racing. Failure to meet the criteria will result in all amounts being repaid to Ontario Racing. All decisions are at the discretion of Ontario Racing and are ABSOLUTE and FINAL
- Horses are currently under the care of an AGCO licensed trainer at the time the application is submitted

Mary Jane Sibbitt's petition to Doug Ford

Below is a petition placed on Twitter and Facebook by Mary Jane Sibbitt, who describes herself as a fan of the game.

"I've always been a big supporter of horse racing and I've worked in the sport myself," she says. "I know what

it's like for people. They're getting desperate and really worried about their livelihoods. I think that Doug Ford is not really understanding the complexity that you can't just work in the morning and look after horses that are not running for purses. Horses have to pay their way.

I'm quite upset about it and I feel very worried about the whole future of the sport."

The petition is online at Change.org and it's being circulated on various horse racing Facebook groups as well as Twitter.

Doug Ford: Allow Horse Racing to Continue

April 2021: Lockdown has placed Ontario Horse Racing under a serious threat of permanent closure. Premier Doug Ford has forced racing to stop, while other outdoor sports and NHL hockey inside arenas are still allowed to continue. While these are not essential, horse racing is.

While the horses and people work at the racetracks every day, they should also be allowed to fully train and race for purse monies during lockdowns, because it could seriously hobble an important agricultural industry that employs thousands of Ontarians. Working right now in the barns of Woodbine and Fort Erie and Woodbine-Mohawk Park Racetracks are many hard-working people caring for horses that have devoted their lives and invested

everything to this sport, and cutting off their source of income from competing is threatening their stability and livelihoods for their entire future.

Disallowing racing is similar to telling a farmer that they can plan and plant their fields, but cannot harvest them and sell them to make up for initial investment and make an income to support their families.

Horse racing behind closed doors without the public is and was successfully practiced in most countries around the world. This entails strict protocols without any on-course spectators whatsoever. For example, look at how Australia considered horse racing essential and it continued on. That continent is now "Covid free".

Please have confidence the essential horse racing industry in Ontario can follow safe protocols, and thereby protect the livelihoods and the income for many workers and their families of this important agriculture sector in Ontario and allow horse racing in Ontario. This is much more than a sport, and extends much further than just the barns at the racetracks. There are breeders, suppliers, and many businesses that benefit as a result. It is the lives of these people and the history of the sport on the line. As many are now leaving or not arriving due to forced closure of the afternoon racing, it is clear that all essential agricultural workers should have a right to be allowed to do their jobs in full.

Standardbred Improvement Program

The 2021 Standardbred Improvement Program (SIP), based upon the recommendations of the industry representative Standardbred Advisory Group, has been approved by the Ontario Racing Board of Directors.

The 2021 program total, which includes participation fees, is projected to be \$18.043 million, with projected Ontario Sires Stakes (OSS) purses of \$14.620 million and total reward incentives totalling \$2.630 million. This includes the \$4.5 million that is contributed through the Enhanced Horse Improvement Program (E-HIP).

Of note, OSS Grassroots legs will carry a purse of \$19,000 per division. Grassroots semifinals are \$20,000 per division and finals are set at \$50,000 per division, but

the latter number could increase based on certain financial factors over the season. OSS Gold events feature a purse of \$190,000, while Gold Super Finals will have a purse of \$225,000 per event. The Ontario Racing Prospect Series divisional races will feature a purse of \$6,500 per division with finals worth \$15,000.

The SIP program, which continues to be one of the most successful of its kind in North America, consistently produces Ontario Sired and Ontario Bred Standardbreds that compete and win against the best in the world.

"Despite several difficult challenges faced by the industry, we are still able to offer a lucrative, world-class program, that provides strong purses for owners

and participants, as well as exceptional breeder-based awards," said John Hayes, Independent Chair, Ontario Racing. "Although OSS purses have been adjusted slightly as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic – and we are subject to further risk if live racing is shut down again as OSS purses are funded through Ontario-based wagering – we look forward to another exciting season of racing across the province, which will once again feature some of the very best Ontario Sired and Ontario Bred horses."

This year's OSS season gets underway with a 3-year-old colt pace on May 22 at Woodbine Mohawk Park. For a full schedule of OSS events, as well as important news and updates, visit OSS.ontarioracing.com.

2021 Standardbred Improvement Program Details:

GOLD SERIES

Gold Legs

SIP contribution of \$190,000 per leg (divided by the number of divisions) PLUS Starting Fees, which will be added directly to the purse

The purse for legs with a single division will be announced at a later date

Super Finals

\$225,000 each Age-Sex-Gait class

The Starting Fee for a Gold Leg is \$800

There is no Starting Fee for Gold Super Finals

GRASSROOTS SERIES

Grassroots Divisions

Purse of \$19,000 per division PLUS Starting Fees, which will be added directly to the purse

Semi-Finals

\$20,000 per Semi-final (two per Age-Sex-Gait class)

Championships

\$50,000 each Age-Sex-Gait-class

The Starting Fee for Grassroots Divisions is \$350

There is no Starting Fee for Grassroots Semi-Finals or Championships

PROSPECT SERIES

Prospect Series Legs

Purse of \$6,500 per division PLUS Starting Fees, which will be added directly to the purse

Prospect Series Finals

\$15,000 each Age-Sex-Gait class

The Starting Fee for a Prospect Series Leg is \$100

There is no Starting Fee for Prospect Series Finals

For more information on Ontario's Horse Improvement Programs, visit [OR HIP](http://ORHIP)

Ontario Racing is responsible for the administration of all non-regulatory functions of horse racing in Ontario.

Another season of racing at Fort Erie



Michael Burns Photo

On March 25, Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium (FELRC) announced that they have applied to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) to add two additional race days to Fort Erie's racing calendar. The additional days will be added at the end of the season on October 25 and 26, increasing the total number of race days to 42, up from the approved 40 days.

Purses for the two added race dates will be in addition to those initially planned. FELRC's application to the AGCO has the support of Ontario Racing, Ontario Racing Management, the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, the Jockeys' Benefit Association of Canada, Racing Forensics, and the Ontario Lottery & Gaming Corporation.

"Two more race days will greatly help Fort Erie's resident horse people and will also help to attract more

trainers and horses to Fort Erie's backstretch," said Claude Pilato, chair of FELRC's Board of Directors.

As spring approaches, Fort Erie Race Track is preparing for the upcoming racing season. Horse people will enjoy several improvements made since last fall, including a full-scale drainage system and new sprinkler system on the turf track. These systems will ensure better control over the turf surface, resulting in safer racing conditions. Improvements have also been made in the backstretch, including new eaves troughs on many of the barns, and more fill in the stalls.

At this time, it is unknown if fans will be able to attend live racing as the season begins due to COVID-19, but Fort Erie has been preparing to welcome back fans this season when it is safe to do so. When COVID-19 direction allows for the return of fans, they will see a number of customer-

oriented improvements to the venue, including a renovated Prince of Wales dining room, new air conditioning system and roof on the clubhouse, and new paddock fencing. Staff remain busy undertaking many more improvements to the facility, which will be completed throughout the summer. COVID-19 safety tools have also been put in place such as plexiglass dividers and hand sanitation stations to help protect staff and fans.

Fort Erie's season is scheduled to run primarily Mondays and Tuesdays beginning at 1 p.m. from June 1 through to October 26. Twilight racing will run Tuesdays throughout the summer, with a 4 p.m. first race post time.

For more information about the upcoming season, and updates regarding fan attendance on race days, visit www.forterieracing.com.

VACCINATION BOOKING IN REXDALE AND HALTON REGION

REXDALE— The Rexdale Community Health Center at 8 Taber Rd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 3A4 has AstraZeneca vaccine's available for those 40 and up starting this Tuesday April 20th and Friday April 23rd. Call the clinic starting Monday April 19th at 416-744-0066 to book an appointment.

HALTON REGION—Halton Region has announced vaccination appointments are now available for ALL essential workers (18+), who live or work in Halton and cannot work from home. Those working with racehorse qualify for vaccine in Halton under "Essential Workers (Group 1)" as "Agriculture and Farm Workers". Eligible essential workers are required to bring a completed COVID-19 Proof of Employment Attestation Form to vaccine clinic appointments, signed by their employer.

[Click Here](#) for the COVID-19 Proof of Employment Attestation Form; and to Book an Appointment [Click Here](#)

The HBPA encourages all trainers and backstretch workers to get vaccinated to help us return to racing as soon as possible.

2021 RACING SEASON

While we continue to endure the unknown of this ongoing pandemic, the HBPA would like to take this opportunity to personally thank our members for their continued support, patience, and resilience as we figure out our industry's next steps. That being said, this communication has been particularly difficult to write. The COVID-19 pandemic, along with its numerous variants have taken a toll on our industry.

On April 8th, the HBPA wrote yet another letter to Government officials requesting a meeting to discuss the re-opening of racing. We can only assure you that we are doing all we can. We are also encouraging Ontario Racing and other associations to take a stronger and more energized engagement with the Province. Currently, the HBPA is in discussions with the Ontario Racing Task Force looking at options to try to mitigate owner losses. We will keep you posted.

The best way to assure the earliest possible opening is by make sure we all remain safe, continue to follow ongoing protocols (social distancing, mask wearing and diligent hand washing) and keeping the backstretch safe. We need to be sure we follow all safety measures and ask that only licensed workers handling horses attend the backside. We will continue to keep you updated as more information becomes available. Until then, please keep healthy and safe.

ENVIRONMENTAL FEES

As we continue to face the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and Provincial wide Stay-At-Home order, the HBPA understands the financial hardships our members are facing especially with the delay of the 2021 racing season.

Earlier this week Woodbine Entertainment Group provided relief of 50% off environmental fees for the month of April. In that same spirit the Board of the HBPA has approved further assistance by paying the remaining 50% for environmental fees on behalf of our members for the month April. Therefore, no environmental fees will be charged or paid by our members for the month of April. The HBPA would like to thank Woodbine management for their financial assistance.



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The 17-year-old Owner, The 3-Year-Old Colt, and One Queen's Plate Dream

Story by Chris Lomon / @ChrisLomon



Joshua Attard knew the dark bay colt would be on the list, but he wanted to see it for himself.

In between his virtual online classes, the 17 year-old high school student from Brampton, Ontario, took a few seconds out of a full day to click on the Woodbine Racetrack website.

After another click, he landed on the page he was looking for, the one that heralded the arrival of the Queen's Plate Winterbook, the annual list of predictive rankings for three year-old thoroughbreds nominated to the Canadian Triple Crown.

Attard scanned the page to find his horse.

That's right... his horse.

"It feels great, to be honest with you," said the son of high-profile Woodbine trainer Kevin Attard. "I never expected at my age that I could own a horse that could be in the Queen's Plate."

His hopes of being represented in Canada's iconic horse race (August 22 at Woodbine) lies on the hooves of Keep Grinding, listed at 25-1 in the Winterbook.

The Ontario-bred son of Tizway broke his maiden in

impressive fashion last November to close out his 2020 campaign. Under jockey Justin Stein, Keep Grinding prevailed by a neck in the 1 1/16 mile main track maiden special weight race at Woodbine.

Bred by Huntington Stud Farm Corp., the three year-old is trained by Attard's grandfather, long-time horseman Tino Attard.

"I'm proud of my horse and I'm proud to share this journey with my father and his father, my grandfather. I couldn't ask for anything better. It feels really great. I knew he might be a Plate-calibre horse when he started to work as a two year-old last year. I worked on the backstretch at Woodbine last summer, so I had the chance to watch him work and he would put on a show. His first race on the grass, I knew he had some talent because he came from far out of it and the race was a little short for him. He's a two-turn horse. When he broke his maiden, that's when I said I had a Queen's Plate prospect."

The name of the horse, who has one win from three career starts, is a nod to Toronto Maple Leafs forward Mitch Marner.

Attard came up with the idea after watching the young NHL star over the past few NHL seasons.

"I wanted to name my horse something that motivated me. I play hockey. When I go into the corners, I always tell myself to keep grinding for the puck. So, if I ever had the chance to own a horse, I would name it Keep Grinding. It's something that motivates me and I hope it motivates other people."

The thought of having a horse load into the starting gate for the \$1 million classic is anything but a recent goal for Attard. That dream came to light well before his first year of high school.

"I started going to the racetrack when I was around ten. I remember wanting to go because I was a little bored and I wanted to get out of the house. And the first time I went, it was the greatest feeling. I went to the backstretch to see the horses. I loved them. I would pet them and just enjoy spending time with them. I had a strong connection with them from the start and every year, my love of the horses and horse racing has grown."

Attard, who was three when his father finished second with Alezzandro in the 2007 Queen's Plate, is hoping that this year's edition of the "Gallop for the Guineas" will see

his family name written in the history books.

If Keep Grinding isn't the one crowned Plate champion, the younger Attard would be equally ecstatic to see his father lead a horse into the Woodbine winner's circle.

That would hardly be a longshot.

Kevin Attard has a pair of horses, namely, Stephen, and Haddassah, in the top five of the Queen's Plate Winterbook. He also has Truffle King (25-1), a dark bay son of Giant Gizmo, being pointed towards the Plate as well.

A bay son of Constitution-Naughty Holiday, Stephen is the second choice in the Winterbook at 4-1. He ended his two year-old campaign in style, taking all the spoils in the \$250,000 Coronation Futurity Stakes.

Haddassah, a gelded son of Air Force Blue-Lady Haddassah, is listed as the 8-1 fourth choice in the Winterbook.

Stephen and Haddassah are both owned by the father-son team of Al and Bill Ulwelling.

"I'd still be cheering for whatever horse or horses my dad has in the Plate. If my dad has those three in the race and I have mine, I'll find a way to cheer for all four of them. Just because I own Keep Grinding doesn't mean I won't be rooting for my dad. But I know there's a long way to go before the big day."

Until then, Attard will endeavor to keep the date of August 22 in the back of his mind. Admittedly, it hasn't been an easy task and he knows it will only get tougher in the days and weeks ahead.

"I never would have expected, to be honest, to have a horse like this at my age. I'm really excited to have a horse that is eligible for the Queen's Plate, and that has a chance to be in the race. I know it's a hard road to get to the Queen's Plate, so we'll just hope the horse keeps developing and getting better each week."

He likes what he's seeing in Keep Grinding.

"He's getting better each day, I think. He's bigger and stronger now and looks like he can handle the mile-and-a-quarter Plate distance. Hopefully, he keeps training well and he can be in the Queen's Plate. If I could win it, that would be even better. I'd probably start crying if we won."

Attard is certain of one thing.

"If he does run in the Plate, I know he'll try his best, and I'll be proud of him wherever he finishes. I know he'll live up to his name."

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Episode 59, March 8:

There was a huge upset in the Gotham Stakes at Aqueduct as Ontario-bred Weyburn stunned at odds of 46-1. Canadian drivers **Mark MacDonald** and **Rick Zeron** picked up a lot of cash at the Meadowlands Friday night and we have a story about Cool Rock who found a way to the winners circle after losing 57 in a row. **Lori Cirillo** is just 17, but she owns several racehorses, both harness and thoroughbred, and she tells us just how thrilling it is to be young and winning races. Woodbine's **Mark McKelvie** reveals the six heavy hitters who have staked themselves to the next Mohawk Millions, and veteran jockey **Ademar Santos** is looking forward to posting some big numbers this year at Woodbine.

Episode 60, March 15:

In this week's podcast, **Camilla Christoforou** started her training career with a bang, winning with her first entry. **Bob Baffert** sent out his 13,595th horse and it won the Rebel Stakes at Oaklawn. Drivers **James MacDonald** and **Doug McNair** showed how unbreakable they are – both were thrown from their bikes on Thursday, both came back to win races on the weekend. Jockey **Ademar Santos** won a race for Colebrook Farms at Tampa Bay, and why horse owner **Johnny Taboada** uses the word autism every time he names a yearling.

Episode 61 March 22:

More fun than you ever thought possible in a horse racing podcast. The Louisiana Derby was the first Kentucky Derby prep to offer 100 points to the winner and the favourite flopped. We present Buck Dancer, who deserves to be in the conversation when we argue who's the best trotter in Canada. His trainer **Carmen Auciello** tells us about him. The fastest pacer in Canada so far this year is Sintra and he was one of four wins for driver **Jody Jamieson** on Saturday night. More success in the Meadowlands for **Scott Zeron** and **Mark MacDonald** and you will wish you bet on them. **Kyle Ruhl** is the grandson of **John Ferguson** and while Kyle won't duplicate the great forward's hockey career, he'll take his best shot as a standardbred owner and trainer. **Brian Henderson** was a mutuel clerk at Ontario racetracks for 50 years; we preview his book Win Place Show and tell you how to get a free copy. We also have a mind-blowing story of an English horse player who bet a 5-race accumulator and cashed £250,000 even though his final selection lost. And you will enjoy the race caller who didn't like the move the jockey made, so he called him a "bloody idiot."

Episode 62, March 29:

A sad note in this podcast as the great jockey **Todd Kabel** has died. Woodbine CEO **Jim Lawson** discusses single sports betting and the odds of the thoroughbred opener going as scheduled on April 17. A win at Gulfstream for trainer **Josie Carroll**, six wins on one night for driver **Sylvain Filion**. We also have three Kentucky Derby Preps, a preview of racing at Fort Erie with **Antonietta Culic**, and 17 year-old **Joshua Attard** tells us how thrilled he is to have a Queen's Plate eligible.

Episode 63, April 5:

Another pandemic lockdown means racing in Ontario has been stopped again. Racing continues in the United States and this podcast has three Kentucky Derby Preps, including a mind-blowing upset in the Wood Memorial. Canadians took down races in the U.S. – **Norm McKnight** sent out a winner at Oaklawn, **Bill Tharrenos** scored at Gulfstream, and Chantal Sutherland is also at Gulfstream and she brought home a winner on Sunday. Host **Peter Gross** talks with **Zenia Wadhwani**, Woodbine's Director of Corporate Citizenship about the track's support of students at nearby Humber College. Horse owner **Dale Desruisseaux** explains why he sold his pizza business to get a slice of the horse racing world. And no one took down as many handicapping tournaments and huge Pick 6s like Tommy Massis, who now insists – he's retiring as a professional horse player.

Episode 64, April 12:

There's a very satisfying female component to this week's episode. Host **Peter Gross** talks with the irrepressible **Chantal Sutherland** whose epic career continues as she is winning races at Gulfstream. Another lady rider, **Rachael Blackmore**, became the first female jockey to take down the prestigious Grand National, the gruelling 4¼ mile steeplechase at Aintree. Trainer **Gail Cox** sent out a winner at Gulfstream for Sam-Son Farm, and **Aida Yahyapour** is an award-winning culinary expert who helps us pair great meals with great races. Also in this podcast – Woodbine's CEO **Jim Lawson** tells us how frustrating it is to run a horse racing operation when the government won't allow live racing. Harness driver **Jonathan Drury** did a wonderful thing – he sought out one of his favourite horses, bought him out of a sale, and sent him to the farm for a well-deserved retirement. **Scott Zeron** and **Mark MacDonald** continue to take down purses at the Meadowlands. And all the Kentucky Derby preps have been run; the two Stakes last Saturday produced long-shot winners.

Episode 65, April 19:

With the province back in lockdown and horse racing in no man's land, **Mary Jane Sibbitt** created a petition to let **Doug Ford** know how safe horse racing can be. The race stoppage was a huge impediment to **Anthony MacDonald** whose Thestable.ca had 121 horses and nowhere in Ontario to race. They could not stop the Sovereign Awards and **Mighty Heart** could not be stopped in his quest for the Horse of the Year Trophy. Sam-Son Farm's **Danceforthe cause** was named the Outstanding Broodmare and two days later, one of her sons won a Grade III at Keeneland. **Chantal Sutherland** keeps winning races at Gulfstream, and we also have race calls from Yonkers, the Meadowlands, and just for fun, a race at Oaklawn that gave announcer **Vic Stauffer** fits.

He may be the best trotter racing in Canada, *but not be good enough for the Maple Leaf Trot*

Buck Dancer, a five year-old gelded son of Guccio, has been turning heads lately at Mohawk. On March 15, he got a perfect drive from James MacDonald and parlayed a second-over trip into a convincing win by 1¼ lengths in 1:54. It was Preferred company with a purse of \$34,000 and the field had some pretty salty trotters. In second place was Its Academic, who had conquered this class two weeks earlier for his fourteenth career win. Its Academic, a four year-old, has already earned over \$480,000. The third place horse was Zig Zag, a nine-time winner; the six year-old Perfetto, the 2020 O'Brien Award winner as Older Trotting Horse, was fourth.

You know the expression *You may be richer than you think?* That probably applies to trainer Carmen Auciello. Buck Dancer became a major player in his stable, pretty well without Auciello's knowledge.

"He was in a sale last fall," says Auciello. "They have a mixed sale in Ohio right around the Little Brown Jug. My one owner, Larry Fox from Fox Racing, is always looking for horses that might stand out in a crowd and he spotted him there, and he actually bought him before I even knew about the horse. He messaged me and said, 'I got a nice trotter. I think he needs a big track.' And he sent him up, and that was Buck. I've got quite a few horses from Larry and Buck's been a super nice horse."

Fox paid \$41,000 U.S. for Buck Dancer and that has proven to be a great investment. The horse immediately took down three straight races at Mohawk, each one by open lengths, earning \$33,000 in the process. But, by the end of December, racing was stopped in Ontario.

"He was great for three starts, and then we got shut down," says Auciello. "So, we sent him down to my stable in New York, and he raced five times at the Meadowlands."

Buck Dancer ran his win streak to four with a victory on

the 23rd of January at the Meadowlands, but after rising in class, recorded a second, a sixth, and a pair of fourths.

"Once we opened up, back up here, we couldn't wait to get him back," says Auciello.

Buck Dancer and Mohawk Raceway are obviously a match made in harness racing heaven. On March 1, he trotted home by over 3 lengths in a non-winners of \$18,000 in their last five. One week later, he romped again, stopping the clock in 1:53.4, the fastest mile trotted so far in Canada. His win on March 15 gave him another three-race win streak and a record of 6 for 6 at Mohawk. With those three wins in March, Buck Dancer earned another \$43,000.

"I think the main thing with Mohawk is the last turn; it's such a wide, sweeping turn," says Auciello. "He really likes it. He always seems to be on the outside or following cover in that last turn, and then when you tip him free, he really fires down the lane. He hits one knee a little bit, and he tends to bear in a little, so he's best on a big track. It just seems that he loves the turns and the surface here."

That excellent drive by James MacDonald on the 15th of March deserves props. MacDonald was at work just 4 days after a scary looking spill, in which he was ejected from the sulky, landing hard on the track. At the hospital, he was diagnosed with a bruised lung.

"He bounced back pretty good," says Auciello. "He's tough. He drove on Friday the day after his accident, and he said, 'I'm a little sore, but I've been worse'. Apparently, he has a high pain threshold."

The biggest race for trotters in Canada is the \$560,000 Maple Leaf Trot. Auciello would love to see Buck Dancer in that one, but right now it doesn't seem all that likely.

"We have paid him into that for this year," he says. "The problem with that is, since COVID hit last year, they have

eliminated the eliminations, so now, instead of having eliminations and a final, they just have the one dash. The only horses that can get in are the top 10 lifetime money earners."

That being the case, Buck Dancer is unlikely to make the field. Through March 15, his career earnings are just \$143,000. Consider some of the horses that ran in the Maple Leaf Trot last year: The winner, Atlanta, has earned \$2,859,610, the second place finisher, Lindy The Great, has banked \$1,104,341. Chimpanzee finished third and his bank account shows \$2,792,478. Crystal Fashion, the fourth horse, has \$2,124,238.

That tells you two things - get yourself a good trotter and you can make a lot of money; and - Buck Dancer can crush the best trotters on the scene week after week and still not have enough to get into the Maple Leaf.

And taking on the best as often as possible is exactly Auciello's plan.

"I'm going to race him every week until he shows me that he needs a break," he says. "The one thing with the Preferred is, it doesn't seem to go every week, because they don't get enough horses. But every time that class goes, I'm hoping he'll be in there."

Auciello is thinking of the other really good trotters in Ontario right now.

"It's Academic, the horse that was second to him in that March 15 race - he's been the best one over the last couple of months. And Oney Hall from Robert McIntosh has been right up there for the last few months. Baillargeon always seems to have some good ones like Zig Zag. Perfetto won the O'Brien Award last year. He finished fourth to Buck. So, it was a pretty good field of horses that he beat. Beating them once doesn't mean you're the best trotter down there, but he fits right in with them, that's for sure."



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“Barbados needs a proper horseracing facility”

by Morissa Lindsay

Originally published in Barbados Today

Champion jockey Patrick Husbands sees Barbados as the Las Vegas of horseracing in the Caribbean but says that until a race track is built the sport locally will remain behind.

The 47 year-old Husbands who is contemplating retirement at the end of this year said Barbados has the worst race track in the world and yet has the biggest purses in the Caribbean.

“I was saying so for the last decade. Anytime they build a race track here, the whole of England and Canada will move here. Horseracing in the Caribbean is here. Barbados is the Las Vegas of the Caribbean in everything. We just need a race track. Barbados is the only race track open to the public. So, that is why the Barbados race track is the only race track closed down in the world all last year because it is open to the public. So, they can’t run races. If Barbados’ race track was enclosed, I guarantee that the prime minister would let races run. But you see Trinidad, Jamaica, and the whole world are still running races during the pandemic,” he said.

An avid road tennis player, Husbands spent the last couple of weeks keeping fit by playing several matches in his Hart’s Gap community located near the Garrison Savannah. This is in preparation for the 2021 thoroughbred season at the Woodbine race track in Canada where he has made his name.

During an interview with Barbados Today, Husbands, one of the greatest ever Barbadian jockeys, said that when it came to talent in the sport, Barbados was blessed. From Sir Michael Stoute in England to Saffie Joseph Jr. in Canada (both trainers), Husbands noted there were a number of gifted individuals at several levels in horseracing.

“When you say football, you would say Argentina; when you say hockey, you say Canada; when you say basketball, you say the United States of America. When you say horse racing, you have to point your fingers at Barbados in all circles – jockeys, grooms, trainers,” Husbands said.



He added: “In the outside world it takes them two years to learn to ride. Here in Barbados, in six weeks a gardener, anybody can learn to ride here in Barbados because we are natural. These guys here, look how tight this track (Garrison) is and they give ten of these guys licence one time. So, if you don’t know how to ride, you would get hurt here. But these guys are just natural. Barbados is blessed when it comes to horse racing.”

Husbands, with a stellar career of 137 Stakes in North America, 29 of which are Graded, stressed however that Barbados needed to get updated if it wanted to capitalise on the talent that exists.

“To me as a professional rider, horse racing in Barbados has left the Garrison about 30 years ago. We need to get updated. We have good riders all over right now. Everybody wants to come back home and ride. We have the Irish, the English want to come to Barbados and ride for the winter. We have Canadian jockeys who want to come here. The owners want to come here but there is no race track here,” Husbands

stressed.

Despite the need for Barbados to get with the times when it comes to horse racing, Husbands mentioned that he was thrilled to see night racing staged for the first time last year at the Garrison Savannah. It was the first time in horseracing history that night racing took place anywhere in the Caribbean.

Husbands became the youngest rider to win the Cockspur Gold Cup at age 16. For the first time since its inception in 1981, the prestigious Gold Cup sponsored by Sandy Lane did not take place this year. Noting it was unfortunate that the race had not come off, Husbands nevertheless said he does not watch local horse racing because of the treatment meted out to him.

“The Gold Cup has been around since 1981; it is the most prestigious race in the Caribbean. I win races all over. From California, back from the south to the north, all over, and to me the stand out is winning the Gold Cup,” Husbands said. “You go down to the gates and the guys wish that you break your neck. They curse you. And when you are outside of Barbados everybody says you are a champion. Trinidad loves me, Jamaica loves me. Every track I race at everybody just freaking out just to meet me and stuff. I’m right here in Barbados and all they want me to do is break my neck, this and that. It is a big turn off. I am being honest. I haven’t watched Barbados horse racing for many years because I can’t stand watching Barbados horse racing. But in Trinidad, Martinique, and all over, the people love me like cook food.”

Based in Canada where he has lived for the past 26 years, Husbands has won numerous championships and awards including the National Sports Council’s Sports Personality of the Year.

Husbands said he is looking forward to a good year in 2021, even though his career has been reduced to three races a day since his life-threatening injury back in 2013.

As to what his future holds in horse racing Husbands said: “I would decide if this is my last year. But I am looking to come back home. That is my thought right now.”

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ODDITIES & ENTITIES

Punter 'settles' for £250,000 on £5 bet

Paul Dean is a horseplayer in Stockton-on-Dees, near the north-east coast of England. In mid-March, he put down £5 on an accumulator, the British version of a Pick 5, with selected races over several days. One by one, his horses came in, all of them at very good odds. He had Golden Horde at 12-1 in the Commonwealth Cup, and Hello Youmzain at 10-1 in the Diamond Jubilee Stakes, both races at Royal Ascot. He also backed Shishkin, who won the Arkle at 4-1, and then he was on 25-1 bomb, Bob Olinger, who surprised in the Ballymore.

So, it boiled down to this; if the heavy favourite, Envoi Allen, would win the Marsh Novice Stakes at Cheltenham on March 18, Betfair would pay Dean £511,000. But they also offered him a cash out of £250,000. Dean thought about it long and hard and elected to take the £250,000; actually, the terms of the settlement allowed him a smaller bet on Envoi Allen that would have added £50,000 if the previously unbeaten horse prevailed.

The race was at 1½ miles over jumps and imagine Dean's massive sigh of relief when Envoi Allen fell at the fourth fence and was out of the race. It did not affect Dean's bet when Chantry House at 9-1 was the winner.

"It's a fantastic offer and I couldn't be happier," said the newly enriched Dean. "I've definitely done the right thing. I'll be going on a lot of holidays! It's my mum and dads' 70th birthdays this year, so we'll be going to New York and to some of the best golf courses in the world. I really want to play Bethpage and Sawgrass. And I think I'll buy a horse."

Are you able to tell why this trotting race at Pompano had an unusual finish?



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