

# DOWN THE STRETCH

CANADA'S MOST INFORMATIVE AND ENTERTAINING HORSE RACING NEWSPAPER



Horses back at Woodbine page 4

## Horses... ...and people at the track!



People back at Woodbine page 3

### ALSO INSIDE

|                       |           |                |         |                      |               |                       |         |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------|---------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Keveh Nicholls        | Page 4    | Cartoon        | Page 9  | Ajax Downs           | Pages 14 - 15 | Chantal Sutherland    | Page 20 |
| Racing Night Live     | Page 5    | Belmont Stakes | Page 10 | Jim & Barbara Wright | Page 16       | James MacDonald       | Page 21 |
| Laura Diakun          | Page 5    | Bill Tharrenos | Page 11 | Blake & Ozzie        | Page 17       | Weyburn               | Page 22 |
| Woodbine Stakes       | Pages 6-7 | Jim Lawson     | Page 12 | Milena Kwiccién      | Page 18       | Slanted Starting Gate | Page 22 |
| Whip-free at Monmouth | Page 8    | Tony Kerwood   | Page 12 | Winning in Bunches   | Page 19       | Oddities & Entities   | Page 23 |

## Introducing the first-ever 2022 SANTA CRUZ



# PINE VIEW HYUNDAI™

One of a kind. For adventures of every kind.  
Arriving late summer 2021.

**Pre-Order yours today!**

**3790 Hwy 7 (at Weston Rd) • 905.851.2851**  
[www.PineViewAuto.com](http://www.PineViewAuto.com)





# TIP

## *Incentives, Bonuses, Awards*



Dave Landry

- Breeders Awards
- Ontario Bred Purse Bonus
- Ontario Bred Restricted Stakes Racing
- Stallion Awards
- Sales Credits
- Canadian Bred Stakes
- Ontario Sires Stakes
- Fort Erie Program
- Sales Stakes Program
- Mare Incentive Programs
- Live Foal Program

TIP is administered by



[ontarioracing.com](http://ontarioracing.com)



# Rare Species Sighted at Woodbine



Jennifer Petricca and Christian Alexander



Debbie Fletcher and Steve Gilmore



Down The Stretch contributors Garnet Barnsdale and Nicholas 'Ace' Barnsdale contributed their presence



Wes Gayner



Alma Contreras and Leah



Hayley Dodd and Jacklyn Bokla



Trainer John Mattine



A nice superfecta Robbie, Mo, John and Sandra



Vince Campanella had a 'smokin' day at the track

And suddenly, there they were – first one at a time, and then in groups – that genus known officially as *Equus Fanaticus*, the horse racing fan. This had not been observed for a long time, and it was feared by some to be extinct. But at Woodbine on July 1<sup>st</sup>, actual people were at the track.

Trainer John Mattine had a couple horses entered. "It feels fantastic," said Mattine about being allowed back on the Woodbine patio. "It's great to see fans. It's about time."

Mattine's experience was not ideal. Pink Lemonade, a

horse he trains, finished 5<sup>th</sup> in the 1<sup>st</sup> race and his 3-year-old filly, My Dad Rocks, was 11<sup>th</sup> in the second.

Luis Contreras' wife, Alma, was there with 5-year-old Leah.

"It's pretty good to be back," said Alma. "We're excited to be here."

There was reason for the Contreras family to be excited. Luis won the opening race, guiding 7-1 shot, Executive Sight to a 1/2 length win for trainer Darwin Banach and owner JWS Farm.

Debbie Fletcher and Steve Gilmore came to watch their horse, Saeu, which was running in the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

"It's nice for us as owners to be back at the track," said Fletcher.

"This is a lot of fun," added Gilmore. "We thought it was going to rain. They're treating us well."

Fletcher and Gilmore got to say, "Ow," after Seau ran 4<sup>th</sup> in his race.

Jockey Gary Boulanger did not hit the board with either of his mounts, but was probably happy that his girlfriend, Jennifer Petricca, and 8-month-old son, Christian Alexander, were both able to sit in the sun and watch the races.

"I work in the backstretch," said Petricca. "But I wasn't allowed to bring the baby. It's exciting for Gary to see his son here. He always tries 100%, but today he's trying 150%."

Vince Campanella looked to be in his comfort zone, smoking a huge cigar.

"I've been waiting all year, a year and a half now," said Campanella. "Beautiful day. I've been looking forward to this. A day out to get away from the family."

"Today it's exciting," said Wes Gayner. "It's good to be back, I'm close to the front, and everything is great."

Hayley Dodd and Jaclyn Bokla are best friends. Hayley has been coming to the track all her life, but this was Jaclyn's first appearance.

"It was just a spontaneous thing," said Bokla, "We just said, 'Let's go to the track.'"

## STAFF

PUBLISHERS: Anthony and Milagros Kalloo

EDITOR: Peter Gross

ART DIRECTOR: Gord Steventon

PROOF READER: Susan Nash

WEB MASTER: Robert Gabriele Jr.

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Bill Finley, Chris Lomon

Our Publication Mail Agreement Number Is 41710012.

Mail:

Down The Stretch  
#11-1211 Parkwest Place,  
Mississauga, ON L5E 3J3

Phone: (905) 990 1171 pgross@rogers.com

DOWN THE STRETCH assumes no responsibility for claims made by advertisers and makes no recommendations as to the purchase or sale of any product, service or other item. All letters or comments sent to DOWN THE STRETCH Newspaper become the sole property of DOWN THE STRETCH Newspaper and may be used and published in any manner whatsoever without limit and without obligation and without liability to the author thereof.

## DOWN THE STRETCH is available at:

Woodbine Racetrack, Woodbine at Mohawk Park, Ajax Downs

**SUBSCRIBE to**  
**DOWN THE STRETCH**  
**Only \$36**  
**a year**  
**pgross@rogers.com**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Make cheque out to Down The Stretch

Send to:

Down The Stretch

1211 Parkwest Place #11

Mississauga, ON

L5E 3J3

# Back-to-Back

Overlooking the fact that Ontario was the last jurisdiction on the planet to allow horse racing to resume, harness racing restarted at Mohawk on June 11 and the thoroughbred season began on Saturday, June 12.

While racetracks in the U.S., Europe, South Africa, and Australia continued to operate safely during the pandemic, Ontario stood alone in its abundance of caution, even as horse racing in other provinces flourished. In May, there was harness racing in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Century Downs in Calgary and at Fraser Downs in Surrey B.C. Thoroughbred racing at Century Mile, Edmonton and at Hastings Park in Vancouver also predated the reset in Ontario.

Ok, that's all the whining for now. On Friday, June 11 at 7:10 p.m., 9 pacing fillies and mares lined up for race 1, which had a purse of \$17,000. The three-year-old daughter of Sportswriter, Amini, got a well-timed drive from Doug McNair to win by 1 ¼ lengths in :28.2 and that was the first pari-mutuel harness race in Ontario since April 2. Amini is trained by Richard Moreau for owner David Morgan of Hamilton, and she paid \$8.40 to win. That was one of two wins for McNair on the night. James Macdonald and Sylvain Filion also had a pair. The purses were nicely distributed as 11 different trainers and 11 different owners celebrated victory. The handle of \$1,748,062 was not tremendous (Friday nights, Mohawk has to compete with the Meadowlands and an evening card of thoroughbred racing at



Churchill Downs).

Saturday at Mohawk, James MacDonald won four races (\$6.40, \$8.80, \$8.90 and \$4.20).

Trainer Carmen Auciello sent out three winners including He's Swift, who stunned the bettors by pulling Jonathan Drury to an impressive win in the 4<sup>th</sup> race and ringing up a \$97.20 win price, the biggest \$2 payoff of the early season.

Again, the handle was not sensational, at just \$1,634,850.

A much different story unfolded with the thoroughbreds, which started their Ontario season on Saturday, June 12. On the 11 race card, \$6,912,477 was bet, and that is the most ever for an opening day program at Woodbine.

Daisuke Fukumoto is the reigning Queen's Plate champion jockey and he paid immediate dividends to his agent, Pram Seebah, who spent weeks plowing through bureaucratic

paperwork to renew his jockey's licence. Fukumoto won the first race aboard Five Days In May, which is owned by her breeder, Frank Di Giulio Jr. and trained by Robert Tiller. Five Days In May paid \$11.80. Tiller won two races on the card and Rafael Hernandez, the 2020 riding champion, was the only jockey to win a pair.

The next day, they ran 13 races at Woodbine, and the star of the show was Emma-Jayne Wilson. She won the 5<sup>th</sup> with



Yola (\$6.80) for trainer Martin Drexler, then captured the 6<sup>th</sup> with Giant Credit (\$11.20) for Francine Villeneuve. Wilson's 3<sup>rd</sup> winner was Pound Green in the 13<sup>th</sup> and anyone who pounded some green on that four-year-old gelding got back \$8.70 for each \$2 bet. Pound Green is trained and owned by Roger Atfield. Trainer Ashlee Brjnas sent out two winners for Colebrook Farms: Deal Maker (\$8.50) won the first race for Luis Contreras, and Wace Bay surprised in the 4<sup>th</sup> under Leo Salles, returning a \$39.30 win ticket. And the handle for the first Sunday of racing was also pleasing to the suits – it was \$6,430,066.

## Keveh Nicholls' Breakout



Every racing season, wonderful stories will be written by the horses, the trainers, and the jockeys. In June, the compelling narrative was all about 35-year-old Keveh Nicholls. Nicholls who, like Patrick Husbands, is from Barbados, has never won more than 27 races in a season. His career goes back to 2004 when he was riding at Assiniboia Downs in Winnipeg.

If Nicholls was riding under the radar for several years, that's not happening anymore. He went winless in his first 27 rides at Woodbine this spring, and then he went nuts, winning 9 of his next 18 (one of those wins was at Fort Erie) as he vaulted himself into the top 5 among Woodbine jockeys. Nicholls explained to **Down The Stretch** that there might have been an emotional turning point.

"I haven't had a win streak like this before," he says. "My dad, Andy, passed away recently and I was thinking about him. I felt really heartbroken. My dad was my biggest supporter in horse racing. He backed me 100%. He owned horses in Barbados, and he also trained. He always told me, 'You have a wonderful talent. You have a gift.' On Father's Day, I was crying the whole day. I said, 'I just want to win some races for Dad.' And ever since then, the horses started to run. It's unbelievable."

Father's Day was June 20. Nicholls scored his first win aboard Keen Samurai, which paid \$30.40 for trainer Santino DiPaulo. That was the 2<sup>nd</sup> race on the card. Two races later, he brought in James Bay (\$8.70) for trainer Krista Cole-Simpson. There was a win at Fort Erie on June 21, then 2 more on June 24 at Woodbine, then another pair on June 25. On Saturday, the 26<sup>th</sup>, he won with Bode's Tippy for DiPaulo, and anyone betting that horse could buy the beers with the \$26.40 win price. And the next day, just to top himself, Nicholls surprised with Edwin Knight's 5-year-old gelding Am Prepared, which lit up the board at \$60.40. And those who cashed in can thank a jockey who made an in-race assessment to give his horse the best chance.

"In that race, going to the first turn, we were four abreast," he says. "So I took my horse back, dropped him in, saved some ground. He was moving like he was the 3-5 favourite. I saved ground on the inside and turning for home, I split some horses and he just took off. He ran a hell of a race."

Nicholls' agent is Leroy Trotman, who also handles Patrick Husband. Trotman knows that when Nicholls gets on a live horse, we should expect a very good outcome.

"It's all about the horses," he says. "For the first 27 horses, we didn't get that racing luck that we needed. Then it all fell into place. I won't say that I expected that, but he's an

excellent rider. He just didn't get the quality of horses that some of the other riders get. I was looking forward to seeing this kid on better horses and seeing what he could do."

You often see this phenomenon at the track. A jockey wins a race, then goes right out and wins the next one. Winning spawns more winning.

"Once you're winning, your confidence goes through the roof," he says. "You see everything clearly and you make the right decisions, and the horses feel that, and they just run for you."

There's a stat in horse racing called ROI – return on investment. It's calculated according to what a jockey's horse pays minus the amount you bet. If you put \$2 to win on each of Nicholls' 45 rides in June, you spent \$90 and you cashed \$182. That's an ROI of over 100%. Ask your broker if that's good for a three-week investment.

If Nicholls can come close to maintaining this great pace, he has every chance of doubling his best season ever – mathematically he is on pace to win more than 50 races. His goal is much loftier than that.

"I want to be leading rider," he says. "I'm just going to ride every horse like it's the favourite. Horses don't know their odds."

These must be good times for Leroy Trotman. He books for Husbands, and that's never a bad thing. And now, not only is Nicholls tearing up the tote board, but Trotman reports the guy is a quality human being.

"He's very good to work with," says Trotman. "He's a gentleman and a half."

By July 5, Nicholls was 4<sup>th</sup> in the Woodbine standings with 10 wins in 64 mounts. Emma Jayne Wilson's 19 victories led the colony. Nicholls also won twice from his first 4 assignments at Fort Erie.

Racing Night Live, produced jointly by Woodbine Entertainment and TSN, returned on Friday, June 18 and, according to Woodbine Entertainment CEO Jim Lawson, it will have all the angles covered.

Racing Night Live (RNL) will showcase world-class Thoroughbred and Standardbred action from Woodbine Racetrack and Woodbine Mohawk Park, respectively.

For Lawson, it's not just the dual-breed live horse racing offering – seven or eight races over two hours – that makes RNL must-see TV.

"I really loved what we did last year," says Lawson. "We had become mired in the traditional broadcast of racing, handicapping, and wagering. It was hugely successful, a show that was largely geared to a new fan base and a new audience. I looked forward to it every week because it was fun, and it was new. It certainly took racing to a new level of fun."

The idea for RNL was born after Lawson and Christina Litz (former Vice President, Digital Media, Business and Revenue Development with Woodbine) approached TSN with the idea of broadcasting live horse racing on Thursday evenings, a night that is traditionally dedicated to CFL action.

When the pandemic hit last March and live sporting events were eventually halted, including the CFL, Lawson and Litz got their plan out of the gates quickly, reaching out to TSN to find out if there was interest in airing horse racing on their channel.

"When it became apparent that TSN wasn't going to have CFL games to show on Thursday nights, I reached out to Stewart Johnston [Bell Media's SVP of Sales & Sports] and told him we'd be ready to go," says Lawson. "That was at the time the Premier announced the reopening of the economy, in what was then called Phase 1, on May 27. I asked Stew if he would be interested in airing horse racing. After talking with Stew and Christina, and speaking with Paul Graham (Executive

Producer, TSN), we got the nod to go ahead with it."

Not surprisingly, industry partners OLG, HBPA, and COSA all stepped up quickly as sponsors to help bring the show to life and have committed to return for 2021. The show was also supported by Woodbine partners Pepsi, Kraft-Heinz, DRF and Budweiser.

With TSN's interest, combined with support from key industry partners, the show still faced some unprecedented challenges brought on by the global pandemic.

"TSN saw it as a good testing ground on how to broadcast live sports during a pandemic," says Lawson. "There were all kinds of procedures and protocols they developed with us. Wearing masks, physical distancing – there were a lot of different challenges."

Despite several hurdles to overcome, including navigating a broadcast in the midst of COVID-19, RNL's first show of 2020 aired on June 11, making it Canada's first live sports broadcast production during the pandemic.

"April and May had passed, so there were a couple of months of just nothing in terms of live sports," says Lawson. "People were starving for something live. The idea for RNL was mostly spawned because there were no live sports available for fans. We put it together really quickly."

From having the Juno Award-winning Canadian music group Arkells performing, to different camera angles capturing all of the on-track action, to the hosts seamlessly keeping pace between the two breeds, to Brodie Lawson presenting a weekly segment called "**Top 5 Presented by Pepsi**", and a clever and fun way to educate fans about the sport through a segment called "**Angles**", RNL resonated with fans at the outset and continued to evolve throughout the season.

"The show took on a new life, bringing a fun experience

to viewers," says Lawson. "We had never taken that approach before where there was a new target audience. There was music, up-and-coming bands – it just had a different feel to it. I think that made it a lot of fun, to have the music, and a new, fresh approach. The Top 5 was interesting, not only for newcomers, but for also for people that have been around racing a long time. I looked forward to what music and what band was going to play, what slant the show would have on racing that week. I think it was great."

Racing Night Live, uniquely, can present two genres of high-level racing, something pretty well no other racing entity appears to have the capacity to do.

"Having the two breeds was fantastic," emphasizes Lawson. "No one had ever been in the position we are, to have what we do – two breeds racing at the same time. I can't think of any racetrack in the world that can go back and forth on the same show."

Perhaps most importantly, the show cumulatively reached more than 2.4 million viewers, showcasing racing to a new audience in 2020.

"We were able to sell our sport," says Lawson. "We spent a lot of time with the jockeys and drivers, in particular, getting people to know them, to hear their stories. Those human-interest stories we did were fascinating and they really resonated with people."

After the first five broadcasts, RNL will have a three-week break for the upcoming Summer Olympics, and then air 10 more shows. "I absolutely am looking forward to it," says Lawson. "I can't wait for that first show and all of our broadcasts this year. I think that everything RNL offers is great for horse racing across the country."

The regular hosts for the show are Jason Portuondo, Laura Diakun, Brodie Lawson, and Chad Rozema.

## Laura Diakun Loves Covering Horse Racing



There are several terrific things about Racing Night Live on TSN Friday nights. The alternating of thoroughbred and standardbred races is unique in broadcasting. The two venues, Woodbine and Mohawk look great, thanks to the camera angles and the drones, and, of course, the racing is as good as it gets.

The human component, however, is critical, and Racing Night Live nails it with co-hosts Jason Portuondo and Laura Diakun. Portuondo started as an exercise boy way back in the 90s, and has grown into a knowledgeable and charismatic host. But we're here to talk about Diakun, who, while she admits she's not as experienced as her co-host with a racing form, she is hardly a neophyte.

"I've been lucky enough to be part of Woodbine now going back to my Score days some 10 years ago," she says. "Back in those days, we were doing racing a couple of nights a week and

we started the show called Bet Night Live, and that's where I got to meet Rob Platts, Jeff Bratt, Jason Portuondo and Chad Rozema. Then, when TSN and Woodbine had this idea to launch this new show, Racing Night Live, I guess it was just a natural progression since I was familiar with the people that I would be working with and the sport itself, and the vibe they were looking for. I'm by no means a veteran horse racing expert, but you don't need to know a lot about the sport or be an expert to have fun and to enjoy it. So I'm really lucky to get to work with them and to be reunited because I started with that show when I was at the beginning of my career, and here I am again and it's kind of full circle."

If there's one thing Diakun has discovered as a horseracing show anchor, it's that no amount of research, expertise or experience guarantees you can pick a winner.

"There's the story of the wife that got to pick all the football games for her husband and she just based it on what color the helmets were, and she got it perfect," laughs Diakun. "That's kind of the same with horse racing sometimes."

Anyone reading this paper would probably love to be a broadcaster on a horse racing show, but what does Diakun enjoy the most on Friday nights?

"Working with Jason," she replies swiftly. "Jason is a lot of fun. Also, this show has a little bit of extra money, and they use it to sell the sport with the shots and the drones that they're using. It makes it look beautiful in high definition. If you find a job where you get to go have fun for a few hours with your buddy, it just doesn't seem like work. There's some days in which I haven't laughed as hard as I do on the show. Jason gets really

into a horse and starts yelling and you're hearing all these loud noises coming from this man. The biggest thing is we trust each other when we're working together so it makes the time go really fast and it makes it a lot of fun. We're really lucky with the people that we get to work with."

Apparently Portuondo takes great pleasure in needling his on-air partner.

"He likes to point out that he's a Bruins fan and that his team won a Stanley Cup fairly recently," she says. "Whereas I'm a Leaf fan and watching Montreal was painful and I'm very torn. Then, with football, he's an Eagles fan, I'm a Cowboys fan. So that gets a little tense in the fall. There's a lot of teasing."

Diakun does have one element of superiority to lord over Portuondo.

"I'm taller than him," she laughs. "So that helps."

Diakun points out that there's a delicate balance Racing Night Live is attempting to bridge.

"On the one side, you've got your hardcore horse racing fans that just want to hear about handicapping and want to pick winners," she says. "But also, we're trying to bring in a new audience and tell some stories about the jockeys and the owners and the drivers. All the while, we're just showing how much fun horse racing can be. It's a different sport and there's all these characters that you can cheer for. There's nothing like winning a horse race or having a long shot come through to get you hooked. I don't bill myself as a handicapper or as an expert. I think my job is to help Jason and Chad show off the knowledge that they have. So my job is to help people watching at home get a taste of what horse racing is all about."

# Woodbine Stakes

## First Stakes Races

On Saturday, June 18, the first two Stakes races of the year were run, and the girls were front and centre. Race 7 was the \$150,000 Star Shoot Stakes for 3-year-old fillies asked to go six furlongs. Up to that point on the card, the bettors had cashed on just one favourite and that trend continued as Justin Stein orchestrated a winning trip aboard 12-1 shot, Can't Buy Love.

Running for the first time at Woodbine, after being claimed at Gulfstream last winter for \$75,000, Can't Buy Love enjoyed her first try on a synthetic surface. Held back early as the 1-2 favourite, Drunk Dial (Luis Contreras) and Polyanthus (Kazushi Kimura) went sizzling past the half



mile in :44.09. Can't Buy Love started passing horses with a three-wide move around the turn. As the two early pace setters collapsed, Can't Buy Love got the lead in the deep stretch and found the wire ¾ of a length better than Dirty Dangle (Daisuke Fukumoto) in 1:09.47.



"They were moving along the field in front of me," said Stein. "Then Can't Buy Love just settled into stride and waited for her cue. I could tell she wanted to win. She was surging at those horses, and she wanted to be at the wire first today."

This was Can't Buy Love's 3<sup>rd</sup> career win in her 9<sup>th</sup> race. She won twice at Gulfstream. She is now owned by Larry Johnson and trained by Mike Trombeter. The win ticket was worth \$27.30.

The other Stakes race that day was the \$180,000 Whimsical Stakes at 6 furlongs for older fillies and mares. Trainer Josie Carroll sent out the four-year-old Boardroom for her first start of the year, and she was clearly well prepared. With Luis Contreras calling the shots, Boardroom was always close, joined the battle three-wide coming into

the stretch, and was able to repel a late-running Our Secret Agent (Emma-Jayne Wilson) to win by a controlled neck in 1:08.35, a mere 29/100<sup>ths</sup> of a second off the course record held by Pink Lloyd.

"Reading the program, and by the way the track has been playing, that was pretty much the thing to do," said Contreras about his wait-and-see approach. "Everything worked perfect. Every single step of the race, I was right there. She's so amazing."

"I think she's a really special filly and the race set up beautifully for her. Luis sat patiently just off of them, and the filly proved what she is," said Carroll. "I wasn't surprised how close she was with the way this track is playing. This track is very speedy today, so she was a little closer than maybe we had anticipated prior, but the way the day's been unfolding, I wasn't that surprised."

Boardroom, now with 4 wins from her first 6 races, paid \$5.70 to win.

## Pink Lloyd Defeated



On June 20, the amazing 9-year-old Pink Lloyd was unable to take down the Grade 3 \$150,000 Jacques Cartier Stakes for an unprecedented 4<sup>th</sup> time, as Souper Stonehenge, under Patrick Husbands, parlayed a front-running strategy into a convincing 4 length win over Pink Lloyd, who was a good second. After the race, Pink Lloyd's trainer, Robert Tiller, discovered a nasty cut on one of Pink Lloyd's legs, though no one seems to know when in the race the injury occurred.

After pressing the pace early on, Souper Stonehenge took command near the quarter pole from front-runner



Readyforprimetime with splits of :22.72 and :44.93 flashing up on the board.

Pink Lloyd, ridden by Daisuke Fukumoto who replaced an injured Rafael Hernandez, found himself last of 6 down the backstretch, though no more than 3 lengths from the leader. Into the stretch, it looked as if he had a shot, but Souper Stonehenge would not be denied, and was much stronger in the final furlong, stopping the clock in 1:08.89, a little off the course record of 1:09.05, set two years ago by Pink Lloyd.

"Going into this race, I breezed this horse about four times, and I think he's a world beater at Woodbine," said Husbands. "This horse is the real deal right now. I rode him as the best horse in the race. Any time you can beat Pink Lloyd at Woodbine Racetrack, especially sprinting, he's the world beater."

Souper Stonehenge, a 5-year-old trained by Mark Casse for Live Oak Plantation, has run 5 races this year and produced a 5<sup>th</sup>, a 4<sup>th</sup>, a 3<sup>rd</sup>, a 2<sup>nd</sup> and now a 1<sup>st</sup>. You could say he has galloped for the cycle. He paid \$5 to win.

## Outadore Runs Well Out of Doors



Jockey Justin Stein became the first rider with two Stakes wins as he rallied the Wesley Ward-trained Outadore to victory in the \$125,000 Woodstock Stakes for 3-year-olds on Sunday afternoon.

"I'm just fortunate to be on the right horse on the right day," said Stein, who also won the first stakes of the meet on Saturday, with Can't Buy Love in the Star Shoot.

Stein had Outadore midpack before tipping 3-wide on the turn, and in the stretch, he was able to outlast Jaxon Traveller by 1 ¼ lengths in 1:09.77.

Owned by Breeze Easy LLC, Outadore paid \$5.90 to win, and showed he can run on anything anywhere. His 5 career wins have come at Saratoga, Kentucky Downs, Keeneland, Turfway and now Woodbine.

## Souper Escape'd with the Win

Live Oak Plantation horses finished 1-2 in the \$180,000 Trillium Stakes at Woodbine on June 26. The field of 8 older fillies and mares was asked to go a mile and a 16<sup>th</sup>, and Luis Contreras put the defending champion, Souper Escape, on the lead as soon as the gates opened. After splits of :48.42, 1:11.54 and 1:36.46 for the mile, Souper Escape was still on top late in the stretch. But her stablemate, Crystal Glazier (Kazushi Kimura) was whittling down the lead. The wire came just in time for Souper Escape to win by a nose in 1:43.12, less than a second off the course record of 1:42.16.

Trained by Michael Trombetta, Souper Escape, the 2020 Sovereign Award winner as best Older Female on dirt, won for the 7<sup>th</sup> time in 20 tries and paid \$9.20.

**Mighty Heart in the Dominion Day**

A front-running strategy worked in the 2020 Queen's Plate for Mighty Heart, so jockey Daisuke Fukumoto used it again in the mile and a 16<sup>th</sup> Dominion Day Stakes, which had



Mighty Heart all the way in the Dominion Day Stakes

a purse of \$150,000 on July 1.

With only 4 others to deal with, Fukumoto had Mighty Heart on top from the beginning, cutting out comfortable fractions of :48.49, 1:11.99 and 1:36.89 for the mile. March To The Arch (Patrick Husbands), the slight favourite, loomed at the top of the stretch. Malibu Mambo (David Moran) appeared to be a threat as well, but Mighty Heart was stronger in the last 8<sup>th</sup> and hit the wire almost 2 lengths the best in the excellent time of 1:43.33.

Trained by Josie Carroll and owned by Larry Cordes, Mighty Heart won for the 6<sup>th</sup> time in 11 starts. Before the Dominion Day, the horse captured the \$150,000 Blame Stakes at Churchill Downs.

"I thought it [the Blame Stakes] just put him right where I wanted him," said Carroll. "I think he's just a good horse and he's maturing. We're pretty happy with him today."

Mighty Heart paid \$5.90 to win.

**Flashing home in the Selene**

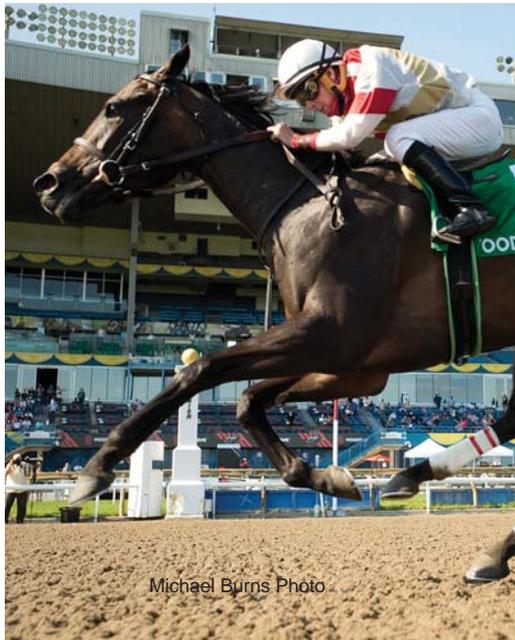


A Flashy outcome

Michael Burns Photo

Six 3-year-old fillies contested the \$150,000 Selene Stakes at a mile and a 16<sup>th</sup> on July 10, and jockey Patrick Husbands rode Our Flash Drive as if he knew she was the best. He had her second for the first 7 furlongs, then took her outside as the field entered the stretch. No suspense in the final 8<sup>th</sup> as Our Flash Drive powered home to win by 2 ¼ lengths. She is now 2 for 4 in her career for trainer Mark Casse and the Live Oak Plantation. Our Flash Drive paid just \$4.70.

**Lorena was in a hurry in the Fury**



Michael Burns Photo

The \$125,000 Fury Stakes on July 10 was also for 3-year-old fillies, and the unbeaten Lorena gave jockey Gary Boulanger his 4<sup>th</sup> win on the card, repelling Astrological (Emma-Jayne Wilson) by ¾ of a length at the end of the 7 furlongs. Lorena, now 3 for 3, is trained by Stuart Simon, and he co-owns with Brent and Russell McLellan and Gerry Olguin. All the bettors got was \$.3.90.

**A facile period for Easy Time**



Michael Burns Photo

The first of two Stakes races on Sunday that had Queens Plate implications was the \$150,000 Marine Stakes at a mile and a sixteenth. Rafael Hernandez provided Easy Time with a perfect ride, and the pair swept to the front at the head of the stretch and galloped home safe by 2 lengths in the excellent time of 1:43.62. Easy Time, now 2 for 4 in his career – with both his wins coming at Woodbine – is trained by Mark Casse for Woods Edge Farm. Easy Time paid \$11.10 to win.

**Tio Magico disappeared on his foes in the Queenston**



Michael Burns Photo

The \$125,000 Queenston Stakes had a field of 7 three-year-olds required to go 7 furlongs, and Luis Contreras gave Tio Magico an aggressive ride, taking the lead just past the quarter and staying there right to the wire, where he was 2 ½ lengths the best in 1:22.54.

Tio Magico is trained by Gail Cox and was ridden by Luis Contreras. Owned by Sam-Son Farm, Tio Magico won for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in 7 tries and paid \$6.50.

Advertise in

# DOWN THE STRETCH

Rates: Full page \$1050  
 Half page \$550  
 Quarter page \$300 Eighth page \$200  
 Business card \$125

PHONE: (905) 990 1171  
 pgross@rogers.com

# Observations From a Whip-Free Weekend at Monmouth, By Bill Finley

(Published originally on *Thoroughbred Daily News*)



We will need a bigger sample size before being able to fully evaluate how Monmouth's experiment with whip-free racing has fared, but this much is certain: Three days in, and after hysterical fomenting from the pro-whip side of the argument, the whip-less races amounted to a big nothingburger. That is to say, there were no incidents, no major form reversals, and no mass boycotts from the horseplayers.

Perhaps this was just round one in what figures to be a long, drawn out battle that will eventually extend beyond Monmouth Park, but the anti-whippers have broken sharply from the gate and assumed a clear lead down the backstretch, all under hand urging.

Other thoughts:

1. Handle wise, Monmouth did not get off to a good start, but that was to be expected because of the rain, the slop, scratches, and the lack of grass racing. On Sunday, the handle was \$2,645,700 over 11 races, off considerably from the \$3,924,465 they bet on the same day in 2019 when there were 12 races. On Saturday, they bet \$2,941,677 over 12 races. On the same day in 2019, the handle was \$5,891,308 for 13 races. That could mean that some bettors were reluctant to play races where no whipping was allowed, but it's more likely that the horrendous weather cost Monmouth any chance of having a good handle. Some had predicted that some owners and trainers would refuse to run at Monmouth because of the whip ban. That simply wasn't the case. You don't attract 107 entries for a 12-race card, like they did Saturday, if people are staying away. When asked if the whipping rules were having any impact on field size, racing secretary, John Heims, said of the Saturday card, "It's not a factor and it wasn't a factor for Friday's card either."
2. If whipping isn't okay in thoroughbred racing in New

Jersey, why is it okay in harness racing? After all, the whip ban was meant to address perceptions that horse racing is cruel to the animal. Harness drivers are very limited as to what they can do with the whip, and can no longer raise their arms above their shoulders and whack the horse. Still, if whips can't be tolerated at Monmouth, then they shouldn't be tolerated at The Meadowlands.

3. There's no doubt that other state racing commissions are watching the Monmouth races intently. If the entire meet goes as well as the first weekend did, expect other states to fall in line with whip bans of their own. Next up will almost certainly be California. In a 2020 interview with TDN, here's what the California Horse Racing Board Director had to say, "I don't think jockeys should carry crops. It's not necessary. To me, it's not a safety issue. Ten years from now, if jockeys are still carrying riding crops, we have taken a wrong turn somewhere. This is a national issue, and I think eventually everybody will be on board."
4. Some predicted that the whip ban would favour front-runners, because closers could not be urged on by their riders with their whips. That didn't happen. With races being run over a very sloppy surface Sunday, speed horses did seem to have an advantage. But on Friday, when the surface was fast, the winner of the first race closed form last and the winner of the second race was 5<sup>th</sup> out of 6 early. Both were running in the middle of the track in the stretch. The races were very formful. Over the three days, 15 of the 28 races were won by favourites for a strike rate of 53.6%. The entire time, only one horse paid more than \$20. While that obviously had something to do with the small fields, it was also pretty strong evidence that a whip ban does not lead to strange results.
5. Will the whip ban cause a reshuffling of the deck when it comes to the jockeys? Riders who rely more

on their finesse and smarts rather than brute strength should do better. It's worth noting that Dylan Davis (3 for 8, 38%) got off to a big start. Riding for many of the top New York outfits like Chad Brown, Davis could have a huge meet. Those were Davis' first mounts since a March 20 spill.

6. While there were no serious incidents on the racetrack, there was at least one example where the lack of a whip could have caused a difference. In Saturday's 6<sup>th</sup> race, Charge Account clearly pulled herself up before the wire, but she was so far in front, it didn't matter. She won by 7 ¼ lengths, but what if she had done the same while battling another to the wire and lost? If he was able to use the whip, could jockey Nik Juarez have gotten the filly to get her mind back on business?
7. It was interesting to see that so many riders declined to carry the whip, which is still allowed for safety purposes. Those jockeys clearly didn't want to take any chances that they would revert to old habits and hit the horse, not when doing so would result in a \$500 fine and a 5-day suspension. It changed over the weekend, and by Sunday, the majority of the riders were carrying the whip. But, from a perception standpoint, the damage had already been done. If whips are so necessary for safety reasons, how can it be that so many riders chose not to use one when one was available to them?
8. After all their fussing and sabre-rattling, the Monmouth jockeys showed that they are not a unified group. Only two jockeys, Joe Bravo and Antonio Gallardo declined to ride. It will be interesting to see if Bravo and Gallardo have a change of heart and return.
9. Yes, this was a difficult and volatile situation, but Monmouth's threats of suing jockeys and banning anyone who refused to ride were, to say the least, over the top.

# RACETRACK HUMOUR



Perry & Mooch



Bob Baffert Once Again Denies Doping Allegations After Medina Spirit Wins Coca-Cola 600 [bit.ly/3oYh4rp](https://bit.ly/3oYh4rp)



# Essential Quality in the Belmont - Some bettors were very confident

A jubilant Luis Saez celebrates a Belmont win on Essential Quality



Essential Quality, thrashed around in a 4<sup>th</sup> place finish in the Kentucky Derby, rebounded for an authoritative win in the 153<sup>rd</sup> running of the Belmont Stakes, which carried a purse of \$1,500,000.

There were 8 colts in the third leg of the American Triple Crown and as the horses were approaching the gate, Essential Quality was 9-5 on the tote board. When the gate opened, he was 6-5. Considering the huge amount of money bet on the race, that suggests as much as \$2 million was bet to win on Essential Quality in the final 90 seconds. And that financial boldness was confirmed by a brilliant race from the son of Tapit.

Jockey Luis Saez wisely held Essential Quality in 5<sup>th</sup> at the half as Hot Rod Charlie (Flavien Prat) was forced to go too fast by an annoying Rock Your World (Joel Rosario). That pair went to the half in :46.49 and to six furlongs in 1:12.07. Around the far turn, Saez had Essential Quality moving with intimidation and he collared a very game Hot Rod Charlie with about an 8<sup>th</sup> of a mile to go. At the wire, the margin was 1 ¼ lengths with a persistent Hot Rod Charlie saving second place – props to that one after the gruelling early fractions.

This was trainer Brad Cox's first Triple Crown win. But it may be his second because Mandaloun might be elevated to Kentucky Derby winner status pending the



Actual people at Belmont to see Essential Quality win

decision on the positive test for the winner, Medina Spirit.

"That was a long way around there a mile a half, but it was exciting," Cox said. "It looked like the horse on the inside, he still had run left. I knew it was going to be a battle down the lane. Hot Rod Charlie ran a tremendous race and I thought with the hot pace, we were in a good spot where they would come back. Luis did a fantastic job of getting him in position turning for home and he was able to really show his stamina late."

An emotional Saez, who also rode Mandaloun, dedicated his first Triple Crown victory to his brother Juan, who perished in a riding accident in 2014 at Indiana Grand.

"This was the race that I wanted to win," Saez said. "Today we made history."

Essential Quality won for the 6<sup>th</sup> time in 7 races. His perfect 3 for 3 two-year-old season earned him an Eclipse Award as the top rookie in North America. He went off at \$2.90-1 in the Kentucky Derby, but was body-checked repeatedly after the start by Rock Your World, and had to endure a wide trip throughout before finishing 4<sup>th</sup>, about 3 lengths behind Medina Spirit.

"In the Kentucky Derby we were so confident that we were gonna win that race," said Saez. "He was ready for the race. But we had a little unlucky start. Today, the main thing was, try to break clean and the rest I know he's gonna do it."

Saez is enjoying his summer of redemption. He guided Maximum Security over the wire first in the 2019 Kentucky Derby. That, of course, was the first Derby in which a horse was disqualified for interference: around the far turn, Maximum Security danced across several lanes, impeding other runners.

With a few restrictions still in place, a crowd of about 12,000 attended the Belmont in person.

For the \$2 bettors, the payoffs were modest. Essential Quality paid \$4.60 to win, the exactor for \$2 redeemed \$15, and with Preakness winner Rombauer 3<sup>rd</sup>, the 2-4-3 trifactor kicked back \$21.70 for a \$1 bet. If, indeed, someone bet \$1,000,000 to win, the return there was \$2.3 million.

## Irada Escapes Serious Injury in Frightening Fall



The helmet of Irada Ortiz after it was struck with a horse, a hoof.

Irada Ortiz, the leading rider in New York, was not able to ride Known Agenda in the Belmont after a terrifying fall two days earlier. Ortiz was riding a 3-year-old filly, Equal Pay, in the 5<sup>th</sup> race, a maiden special weight at 6 ½ furlongs with a purse of \$90,000. As the field came into the stretch, Equal Pay appeared to be closing in on the leaders and was wide on the track, when she appeared to take a bad step. According to the Equibase charts, the filly "got roused near the three-sixteenths and stumbled switching leads, successfully changing over in the hind, while getting her left front caught precariously underneath her; pawed the ground two to three times bobbling to stay upright, tossing the rider from the saddle, recovered to complete the course sans rider and was apprehended by outrider and walked off."

New York Racing Association spokesman Keith McCalmont provided this description:

"Irada's horse, I think, spooked or possibly took a bad step at the 8<sup>th</sup> pole and unseated Irada," said McCalmont. "Irada was immediately attended to by EMS. He was awake, alert, moving all his extremities, but it's always a scary moment when you see a rider go down. The horse was collared and walked home, and the horse is fine. Irada went to the hospital, and we got a message from his agent that he will be out for two weeks. There are no fractures, no major issues, just a sore body. It hurts to lose our leading rider on the eve of the biggest day of racing here at Belmont."

Right after the accident, Irada's younger brother, José, and another jockey, Junior Alvarado, were seen running up the Belmont track to check on the fallen rider.

"It's a really close-knit colony here," adds McCalmont. "They're competitors on the track, but they all go back to the same dressing room. They're all family here. It was nice to see the concern to go up the stretch to see him. And the crowd – they gave him an ovation as he left to go and get treatment."

José Ortiz picked up several of Irada's booked mounts on Belmont day and, apparently, one man's pain is another man's gain. José won the 1<sup>st</sup> on Wit (\$2.90), the 3<sup>rd</sup> with Drain The Clock (\$17) and the 7<sup>th</sup> with Letruska (\$4.40), all horses Irada had committed to. In the Belmont, José delivered Known Agenda to a 4<sup>th</sup> place finish.

At the time of his fall, Irada Ortiz was the leading rider on the New York circuit with 185 wins and a strike rate of 26%.

# Bill Tharrenos' Good Start



**B**ill Tharrenos has been training horses at Woodbine for over two decades. Before he was conditioning, he ran some horses at the track while operating a car dealership. A dreadful confluence of events in 2001 dramatically changed the direction of his life.

"About 20 years ago, we had a horse fire at Woodbine Racetrack, and I lost a few horses," he says. "When September 11<sup>th</sup> came along, just weeks after the fire, our car business was destroyed."

For most people that kind of tragedy over a short period of time would have been devastating. But Tharrenos was only in his thirties, ambitious and resourceful, and he did what he needed to do.

"Right after the fire, I was paying people to train for me, but then chose to start training for myself and my partners," he says. "And things are going well. I've got some good partners around me and we're moving right

along."

Things really moved right along on opening day, June 12, at Woodbine. Two fillies, both trained by Tharrenos, made it to the winner's circle. In the second race, Tharrenos had sent out Divine Martha, owned by Frank Russo. The four-year-old got a confident ride from Ademar Santos, shot to the front early, and pulled away in the stretch to win by almost 7 lengths after 6 ½ furlongs. It was a \$10,000 claim race with a purse of \$26,500. Divine Martha paid \$6.90.

The 6<sup>th</sup> race was a \$7,500 claim race for maiden fillies, and Tharrenos trained the winner. Hidden Identity took Emma-Jayne Wilson to the front early, and against 11 others, pulled off a crush job, winning the 5-furlong dash by 11 ½ lengths in the pretty good time of :58.26. Hidden Identity is owned by Natural 8 Stable and J & B Wright Racing and the 3-year-old filly paid \$12.

"I claimed Divine Martha at Gulfstream Park," says Tharrenos. "She always had some pedigree and we wanted to run her where she could win. We took a little bit of an advantage over the company, and she was determined to win. She brought us a good memory back for Martha Gonzalez."

Sometimes trainers and owners think too much of their horses, put them in too tough, and then wonder why they don't hit the board. For Tharrenos, putting a horse where it can win does everything for the animal's confidence.

"Hidden Identity was very promising as a 2-year-old, and she got hurt and we had to put her away," says Tharrenos. "She's not a big robust filly and she's hard to keep weight on. I talked it over with my partner and we wanted to not only win, we wanted to give her the opportunity to do the best that she could and succeed. And we were looking forward to her winning in a big way, and that's what she did."

**Down The Stretch** is a big fan of both Ademar Santos and Emma-Jayne Wilson. Tharrenos was asked how Santos ended up on Divine Martha.

"He's ridden a couple of horses for me before and he eventually went back to Florida, so we were hoping we would get the guy started back here," says Tharrenos. "It's very hard to get jocks to give you a 110% in the mornings where you need the help, and he was probably one of the most aggressive. So, you pay people back for the hard effort."

And, of course, anytime you get the consistent Wilson on your horse, you increase your odds.

"We've hit it off with her and her agent, Mike Luider," says Tharrenos. "They're hard-working people and they give us the time of day that we need to succeed. I'll tell you what – she's getting on a couple of 2-year-olds for me right now. I am looking for some big things from them."

Tharrenos has an impressive resume on Equibase. He has sent out over 2150 horses with more than 250 wins, accounting for more than \$6,700,000 in purses. His best year was 2015, when his thoroughbreds won 35 races, good for \$840,814. His top horse that year was a 3-year-old filly named Shesanaturalblonde who won 4 of her 9 races and ultimately earned \$187,290.

There's the distinct possibility Tharrenos' numbers in 2021 will eclipse those of 2015. He's optimistic about a few of his students.

"We're going to work a 2-year-old named Summer Sunset by Summer Front," says Tharrenos. "He's eligible for the Yearling Sales Stakes. He's been showing some promise. He's probably ready to run now, but I want to make sure he's ready to tackle the big guys. Summer Front is a Canadian-bred stallion and that means longer distance. We ran a horse that was off a year – a horse called Crafty Conquest. Emma rode her on the first Sunday and he ended up 4<sup>th</sup> to Red Fiction that missed the track record by less than a second. The horse really ran a great race. I think the next time, he'll show his colours and will find himself in the winner's circle. We're a good group and there's a lot of promising things happening."

Tharrenos knows the art of putting horses where they belong, so **Down The Stretch**, which has a modest interest in wagering, asked him if horse players should take a long look at any horse whose trainer is listed as Bill Tharrenos.

"Absolutely," he laughs.

# Things Improving for Horse Racing (and Jim Lawson)



There is no reason to feel sorry for Jim Lawson. As President/CEO of Woodbine, he has a stimulating, great and challenging job and, if the Sunshine List is accurate, he gets more than minimum wage. That being said, since March of 2020, Lawson's professional career has been one huge headache. But in late June, all within three days, he got two pieces of terrific news. On Tuesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Single Sports Betting Bill c-218 was approved by Canada's upper chamber and needs just royal assent, a formality, to become law. This matters to Woodbine, which is a leading contender to operate Single Sports Betting with the distinct possibility of funnelling major dollars back into horse racing.

Then on Thursday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, as part of the Provincial

Government's transition into its second stage of reopening, it was announced that, effective July 1, Woodbine and Mohawk would be allowed to have fans for live racing at 25% capacity. In his tenure as the guy at Woodbine, had Lawson ever experienced two major items of such very good news in such a short time?

"I can't recall two things like this coming at once," says Lawson. "The sports betting is huge for us, especially if it is done in a way that protects horse racing. As for the second piece of positive news, I'm just so excited to let our people come back. We do a great job with the simulcast and the broadcasting. But there's nothing like being there with the jockeys and the grooms and the smell of racing and the horses. It is the fan experience

that has sustained this sport over centuries and will continue to do so. These are big, positive developments and we're excited."

Not that long-time fans can simply drive to the track and march in.

"One thing we're going to have to adhere to is a reservation system," points out Lawson. "So we will have an online registration system that has to do with the ability to do contact tracing. We're going to have outdoor patios open and our Open Table reservation system where we want to make it a pleasant experience, and we will let everyone know that there will be some requirement of masks and social distancing. Of course, we will allow wagering at the track so that's going to be exciting for people to be able go in and make a wager and it feels like a long time since that has happened."

As for the 25% capacity restrictions, that's not going to be much of a problem.

"At Woodbine, there's about 8,000 seats," says Lawson. "That includes the dining room so we should be fine. We also have a very large outside tarmac which can allow many more, depending on the definition of seating capacity. But I think that both places will be able to accommodate around 3,500 again. We're going to have a large patio open at Mohawk, so we're not anticipating issues in terms of people being turned away. Generally speaking, 25% should be well within what we get as a normal crowd."

Jim Lawson still has a healthy head of hair, even if the events of the last 15 or 16 months had him tearing his roots out. Safe to say, his follicles are less vulnerable these days.

"Yes," he says, "There's certainly a little more peace of mind."

## A Milestone for Kerwood



In the 10<sup>th</sup> race at Running Aces in Columbus, Minnesota on July 6, Tony Kerwood drove his own horse, Intrigued Again, to victory in a \$5,200 pace. And with that, Kerwood notched his 5,000<sup>th</sup> win, stopping the clock in 1:56. Kerwood, who grew up in and around Toronto, was a force on the Greenwood/Mohawk circuit, going way back to the late 70's. Twenty times he drove

more than 1,000 horses in a year, 23 times he won over 100 races, and in 15 seasons, horses driven by Kerwood earned over \$2 million. As extraordinary as winning for the 5,000<sup>th</sup> time sounds, Kerwood just shrugs as if it's no big deal.

"I've never been one to shoot for a number," he says. "Winning every race is more important to me. I just happened to get here."

Now 63, Kerwood acknowledges that a new wave of younger, aggressive drivers makes the Ontario circuit more competitive than it ever was.



"I started 45 years ago," he says. "There's only 10 drives in a race and when you get older, the young guys

coming up start taking off."

For the past several months, Kerwood has been piling up the miles, driving in B.C., California, and Minnesota.

"A fellow from British Columbia gave me a call and asked if I'd be interested in driving some horses for him," says Kerwood. "And he gave me a deal I couldn't refuse."

From Fraser Downs Racetrack in B.C., Kerwood went south to California.

"This other fellow who I knew had gone down to Cal Expo, and he called me up and said he could take me and my horse down to Cal Expo if I wanted to," says Kerwood. "There was no racing anywhere else, so there we went."

Through July 9, Kerwood found himself 7<sup>th</sup> in the Running Aces drivers' standings with 11 wins in 101 drives.

At this stage in his career, Kerwood has nothing to prove. He's driving very much for the love of it, but not exclusively so.

"There is the necessity," he says. "I have to eat, too. I enjoy it. This is all I do. This is what I know."

Does he see another 5,000 wins in his future?

"No, definitely not," he laughs. "I'd be lucky if there was another 500."

# DOWN THE STRETCH PODCAST

**On Apple, Google, Spotify, Stitcher, iHeartRADIO  
and wherever you get your podcasts**

## **Episode 71, May 31:**

That was a monster, gutsy win at Churchill by Queen's Plate Champion, **Mighty Heart** and it's just one of many victories in the U.S. by Canadian horsepeople. We've got **McNair, McClure, MacDonald, Zeron** and **Auciello** attached to winning harness races. We have **Chantal Sutherland** producing a \$21.40 winner at Gulfstream. Should Canadian horse racing have a lottery-type game attached? Comments on that from author **Robin Dawson** and Woodbine CEO **Jim Lawson**. **Greg Thompson** from Texas talks about his podcast, which covers only quarter horse racing. And if you remember the terrific jockey, **Ray Sabourin**, you'll gobble up our story on how he's morphed into a chef.

## **Episode 72, June 7:**

Both standardbred and thoroughbred racing resume in Ontario over the next two weeks and Queen's Plate winning jockey **Daisuke Fukumoto** finally has his license approved, thanks to the diligent work of his agent **Pram Seebah**. The 153rd running of the Belmont may have proved that Essential Quality is the best three year-old in North America. Medina Spirit's second test came back positive and there was nothing positive for trainer **Bob Baffert** when his lawyer floundered on CNN. Very restrictive whip rules at Monmouth have provided us with a wide range of responses from journalist **Bill Finley**, former jockey, **Irwin Driedger**, and trainer **Gary Contessa**. And how rare is it for a broodmare to produce twins? How rare is it that both make the races on the same day? Find out in this episode.

## **Episode 73, June 14:**

Harness racing and thoroughbred racing resumed in Ontario and we have hilites from the first cards. There's a new slanted starting gate at Mohawk and **Bill McClinchey**, Woodbine's Director of racing explains the change. We chat with veteran driver **Jody Jamieson** who hated it when the 10-horse started behind the 1, and trainer **Carmen Auciello** gives us 5 horses ready to win, but it's the one he didn't give us that hurts. Jockey Justin Stein is ready to take another run at the riders' title. **Emma-Jayne Wilson** always brightens our podcast when we have her on. **Scott Zeron** winning at The Meadowlands. **Chantal Sutherland** hitting a big number at Gulfstream. And Belterra Park race caller, **Austin Meyer** found a unique way to make a 3-horse race sound funny and intriguing.

## **Episode 74, June 21:**

This is the first Down The Stretch Podcast this year with racing hilites from all three genres in Ontario. We have Stakes races from Woodbine as **Pink Lloyd** was trying to win the Jacques Cartier for a 4th time. It was a mind-boggling week at Mohawk. Driver **James MacDonald** had two 5-win nights and a 4-bagger as well. **Jody Jamieson**, **Doug McNair** and **Sylvain Filion** also put together 4-win nights. But maybe the athletic brilliance of the week belongs to 27 year-old **Rachael Isaacs**. On her first day as a professional jockey, Isaacs won 3 straight races at Ajax Downs. Ever hear of a mare giving birth...then coming back and winning a race? Who is the most wreckless jockey at Woodbine? Agent **Tony Esposito** thinks he knows and isn't shy about pointing out why his jockey **Rafael Hernandez** is out of action.

## **Episode 75, June 28:**

Horse racing is sometimes predictable and sometimes not. In this 75th Down The Stretch Podcast, jockeys **Keveh Nicholls** and **Josh Scott** surprised the bettors and drivers **James MacDonald** and **Jody Jamieson** shared the Saturday night hilites at Mohawk. Woodbine CEO **Jim Lawson** explains why he has stopped tearing his hair out. Trainer **Bill Tharrenos** is enjoying a good start and Chiefswood Stable's **Rob Landry** explains why Weyburn, Canada's best three year-old, might not make it to the Queen's Plate. Veteran jockey **Helen Marie Vanek** is dominating the early cards at Ajax Downs. TSN's **Laura Diakun** conveys the fun she has on Racing Night Live. Why does host **Peter Gross** have to call on his inner restraint while describing a certain win by **Chantal Sutherland**? Ever seen two halves of an entry, sandwiching a 3rd horse in the stretch? Want to know what the stewards did? And we have 91 year-old, **Buddy Simpson**, winning a harness race.

## **Episode 76, July 5:**

Actual people at the track and we talk with them. **Josie Carroll** played it perfectly with **Mighty Heart** and **Belichick**. Jockey **Keveh Nicholls** gives us the emotional back story to his breakout year. Jockey **Josh Scott** tells how he won on his first thoroughbred ride. There were 6 OSS Gold races at Mohawk, all for more than \$100,000. Hippodrome's race caller **Guy Lafontaine** makes his task twice as hard and driver **David Miller** pulled off a near impossible triple header.

## **Episode 77, July 12:**

Queen's Plate candidates ran in two Stakes races on Sunday designed to separate the contenders from the pretenders. **Kevin Attard**, **Gail Cox** and **Robert Landry** assess their horses. There were 4 \$100,000 OSS Gold races midweek at Mohawk. Driver **Tony Kerwood** hits a big number in Minnesota. We have this week's races from Ajax Downs. **Ariane Milligi-Fuller** tells us why **Racing City Realty** will find you a rental if you're taking a road trip this summer to Saratoga. The amazing **Daryl Thiessen**, 52 days after smashing a collarbone and breaking a femur, was back in the winners circle. And how did **Ke\$ha** get into this podcast?



Helen Vanek rode Countryfried Chicken to victory in the 1st race



| ODDS | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Scr | Country               |
|------|-----|---|---|---|---|-----|-----------------------|
| 3    | 1-5 | 3 | 9 |   |   |     | TELLE A SECRET        |
|      |     |   |   |   |   |     | COUNTRYFRIED CHICKEN  |
|      |     |   |   |   |   |     | RED WAGON DUST        |
|      |     |   |   |   |   |     | JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE |
|      |     |   |   |   |   |     | WHISKY JAMES          |

Plenty of leg room at Ajax Downs



# “They’re off!” (finally) at Ajax Downs

Jess a Sweet Surprise was a sweet surprise in race 7



it will be a percentage as opposed to a fixed number.”

The quarter horse is a highly wired animal, and proof was provided just before race 1 when Whiskey James, a three-year-old gelding owned by Carol and Jaime Robertson, tossed his jockey, Cory Spataro, and galloped off into the infield. This caused a 10-minute delay and reduced the initial race field to just 4 horses.

race, she assured us her schedule was the same this year: Wednesdays at Ajax Downs, and Mondays and Tuesday at the Fort.

The second race on opening day was about as dramatic as it could be. After 219 yards, it appeared that My Special Corona, ridden by Ramiro Sanchez and owned by Marie Broadstock, was the winner. The race, though, was at 220 yards and Blue Eyed Merlin, ridden by Norman De Sousa, came flying late to make it very close. Bob Broadstock, trainer of My Special Corona, and Barry Wood, trainer of Blue Eyed Merlin, were leaning on each other near

Very close finish to race 3



The quarter horse season began on a windy Wednesday, June 16, at Ajax Downs and there were multiple story lines and drama, all of which is typical for races that tend to last less than 20 seconds.

Ajax Downs General Manager, Emilio Trotta, pointed out that his sport can withstand much more than a pandemic.

“The quarter horse breed and the quarter horse itself, is one tough horse,” says Trotta. “We’ve taken a lot of punishment since SARP (Slots at Racetracks Program) being discontinued and here we are, still going strong today and we will continue to go on. We’re a fighting breed.”

Since racing was originally scheduled to begin in May, Ajax Downs lost 5 cards of racing.

“So we’re down to 20 days,” says Trotta. “We may add another day or two towards the end of the season.”

Like standardbred and thoroughbred racing in Ontario, fans are still not allowed into the stands at Ajax Downs. Considering how explosive and quick the races are, and the close proximity of the seating to the finish line, the presence of fans is a major part of the experience of quarter horse racing.

“It’s always been about the fans and how close you can get to the action,” says Trotta. “That’s what we always tell people – come out because you can’t get a closer experience than the one at Ajax Downs. Our understanding is that as part of Phase Two, which should be near the beginning of July, we will be allowed some sort of fan base. We’re hoping

When that first race finally went off, it was the mouth watering Countryfried Chicken who scampered to an authoritative win after 250 yards. Countryfried Chicken, a 5-year-old mare, won for the second time for trainer Jason Pascoe and owner Milena Kwiechen. The winning rider was the veteran Helen Marie Vanek.

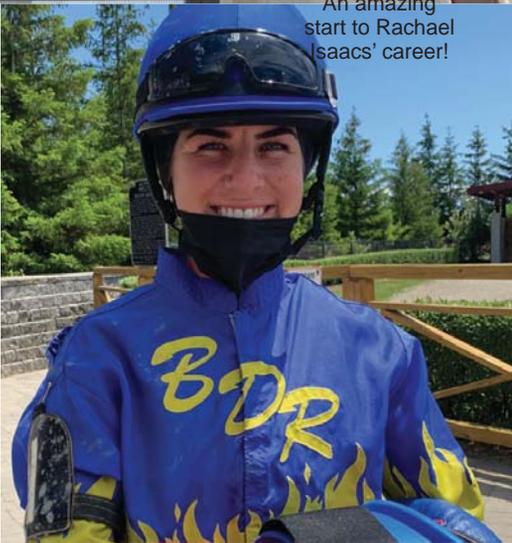
A few years ago, Vanek gave us grief for writing that she was riding permanently at Ajax Downs, when at the time she was also taking mounts at Fort Erie. After winning the first

Track photographer Clive Cohen





An amazing start to Rachael Isaacs' career!



the finish line, awaiting the result. When they flashed #5 (Blue Eyed Merlin), Broadstock, President of the Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario (QROOI), laughed and turned to whomever would listen, saying, "Wow, it didn't look like that to me!"

Blue Eyed Merlin was 18-1 and is owned by James Bogar. But let's get to the big story on opening day. In the first race, Rachael Isaacs made her professional debut, riding Teller a Secret, and though that 5-year-old mare finished 4th in a 4-horse race, Isaacs would go on to make some kind of horse racing history. Isaacs is 27, which might seem a little advanced for someone riding professionally for the first time.

"It was in the back of my mind, but I didn't really take it seriously until the end of the season last year," says Isaacs. "I was out riding with Katie Brown, the outrider, and she said I'd be crazy to not be out there doing it. At the beginning of this season as I was working more and more horses out of the gate, I asked her if I had a shot and she said I'd be stupid not to. So I cut weight the last couple weeks and here we are."

Isaacs is not a tiny woman, like Emma-Jayne Wilson or Skye Chernetz, and quarter horse racing doesn't make its riders whittle themselves away as much as in thoroughbred racing.

"I'm tacking right now about 130," says Isaacs. "I was

Ajax Downs General Manager Emilio Trotta



closer to 140 a couple weeks ago."

That was our conversation with Rachael Isaacs after the first race. No one could have predicted what she would do next. Virtually all rookie jockeys, by necessity, have to suffer a long period of defeat, riding horses that have no chance and finishing out of the money for weeks on end. Also, consider that as an apprentice, Isaacs is not allowed to have a whip.

In race 3, she was seated on Favorite Pearl, a 6-year-old mare who had won just once in 13 tries. Isaacs got her mare out of the gate quickly, kept the grey straight down the track, and withstood a late charge from Ice Cream Cartel (Ramiro Sanchez) to win by a head in 13.626, giving Isaacs her first pari-mutuel win approximately one hour after her career began. Favorite Pearl gave Pascoe and Kwiechen their second win on the card and paid \$8.90.

Apparently, winning was so great, Isaacs decided to do it again in the 4th race. She was aboard Virtuosi, a 4-year-old mare seeking a 3rd lifetime win. Once again, Isaacs gave her mount a great start, kept her straight for the entire 300 yards and hit the wire a long neck the best in 16.094 seconds. Virtuosi is trained by Carol McIntyre for Big Dog Racing Stable and that produced a \$12.30 win ticket.

It also made Isaacs the leading rider at Ajax Downs, and in her 4th and final assignment on the card, she enhanced her advantage. She rode # 2, Shes a Flyin Bok in the 6th race, and when 3 horses from the middle of the starting gate exchanged body checks, Shes a Flyin Bok got a clean break and zipped to the wire an easy 1 1/2 length winner in 13.775 for the 250 yards. Shes a Flying Bok was Carol McIntyre's second win on the day. She is owned by Sam and Mitch Manuel and she paid \$14.40 to win.

Now the question was, in the history of horse racing, had any jockey ever won three in a row on their very first day of professional work? It was a remarkable and historic debut for Rachael Isaacs.

The feature race on opening day was the 7th, and this is the kind of thing you see only in quarter horse racing. Part of the QROOI Sprint Series, this was nicknamed the Gridiron Classic, because it was only 110 yards long. Country Boy 123, a winner of 27 of 43 races lifetime, was pounded down to 45 cents on the dollar, but as soon as the gates opened, Country Boy 123 was slammed by horses on either side. Getting battered at the start in a 110 yard race is not desirable, and with the heavy choice out of it, Jess a Sweet Surprise (Cory Spataro) converted a much cleaner trip into the upset win at over 8-1, with Arctic Fame and Josh Scott coming second at 24-1. Jess a Sweet Surprise is owned and trained by Craig Spada and the 8-year-old mare paid \$18.90 to win and topped an exactor that returned \$177.95 for each \$1 bet. The race was timed in 6.95 seconds, and congratulations to race caller Frank Ferrari for not allowing his brain to explode.

Racing at Ajax Downs continues with cards every Wednesday through September 8, after which the next 7 days of racing will occur on Mondays.

You can't see her, but Helen Vanek's 4th winner was Spy for the Senate on the inside



Kathia Mills photo

## Ladies Dominating Early at Ajax Downs



On the second Wednesday card of quarter horse racing at Ajax Downs, the trend of women jockeys winning continued. After opening day, when rookie Rachael Isaacs won 3 times on her first day as a professional rider, Helen Marie Vanek dominated the winner's circle on June 23. Vanek, who also rides at Fort Erie, won 4 of the 8 races and pulled off the upset in the 8th and feature race.

Vanek started her great day by winning the first race aboard Kepr of the Stars. With the field down to just 3 starters, Kepr of the Stars was the longest shot, but just 9-5. Vanek got the 2-year-old gelding to the wire first by a neck after 250 yards. Kepr of the Stars

is owned by Belinda Taggart and kicked off a pretty good day for trainer Jason Pascoe. The win price was \$5.80.

Vanek, aboard the second longest shot in race 3, KK Blue Cartel, went off at almost 6-1, but pulled away to win by a length in this 250-yard race. Trainer Craig Spade partners with Doug Hart on this 3-year-old gelding which gave the bettors \$13.80.

Race 6 was a 300-yard sprint for \$10,000 claimers. Vanek and Maryland Magic were pounded down to 35 cents on the dollar, and they ran accordingly, winning by a comfortable length and earning a 95 speed index with a time of 15.382. This was a second win for Jason Pascoe on a 7-year-old horse owner by Milana Kwiecien. The win ticket was a puny \$2.70.

The 8th race was billed as a confrontation of the last two Ajax Downs Horses of the Year, Feisty Icon and Had To Be Ivory, but it was Vanek who spoiled that party. In a furious finish, Vanek got Spy For The Senate up by a tiny nose, as both Had To Be Ivory (3rd) and Feisty Icon (7th) failed to produce their best efforts. That was Vanek's 4th win on the card, Pascoe's 3rd and Kwiecien's 2nd. Spy For The Senate returned a \$12.20 payoff and with that, Vanek, Pascoe and Kwiecien were the Ajax Downs leaders among jockeys, trainers, and owners respectively.

Maintaining our theme of female jockeys, Cassandra Jeschke delivered Shaken in the 7th race, so 5 of 8 heats were won by lady riders, after 4 of 7 races went to female jocks the week before.

Ajax Downs has a Facebook page which streams all the races live. There is also a new YouTube page dedicated to race reruns.

## Thoroughbred Owners of the Month: Jim & Barbara Wright

 **WOODBINE**  
presented by WEG

**J**im and Barbara Wright, both in their 70s, are J & B Racing Inc., and they have had a love of horse racing for over 40 years.

Jim got the fever first. He tells a story about having the perfect father to get introduced to the sport.

"My dad, Fred, loved the horses and so did my grandfather, Charlie," says Jim. "My father used to have every Wednesday off and he would tell me, 'Don't go to school. I'll meet you down at the corner and take you to Greenwood.' I always had to put on a suit and tie because that's what my father insisted."

It could not have been too much later that Barbara was indoctrinated.

"I was in high school and working as a cashier part-time at the local grocery store where Jim worked," she says. "We knew each other a couple of years and we got married shortly after."

Barbara has a distinct memory of the first time Jim took her to the track.

"Fire N Desire," she states firmly. Fire N Desire was a terrific horse owned by the late Sam Lima. Jim and Barbara attended the Queen's Plate Trial in 1969.

"I wanted to bet \$2 to show on Fire N Desire, who was a big longshot," she continues. "Jim was so embarrassed that he sent me up to the window myself. He said, 'You should bet it to win.' but I just wanted to bet to show, and the horse won."

All Jim needed to see was one special horse and he was hooked.

"My mother had really good friends that bought this horse in Kentucky," he says. "It was named Burnt Roman, and he won a lot of Stakes races. Jerry Meyer was the trainer and the first time I saw Burnt Roman, I said to myself, 'I've got to be in this game'."

The Wrights can remember the first horse they owned, even if it never won a race for them.

"Road Walker," they say, almost simultaneously.

And you certainly could not say the Wrights were an overnight success. Perhaps an instant success after 2,500 days and nights.

"We went 7 years before we won our first race," says Jim who has a vivid memory of that day.

"I can remember running around crazy getting silks made that day because we never had them," he says. "It took me all morning to get Gail Stafford to make them. I pleaded with her. I told her it was my first horse. I was with Frank Passero then. I was with him for 18 years. I'll never forget we won from the 13-hole. And after we won the race, the jockey Robbie King jumped off and said to me, 'Jim, get rid of this horse'."

The most memorable and profitable horse owned by the



Wright was Shesnaturalblonde.

"We bought her in the sale here at Woodbine," says Jim. "She made \$264,000 for us and I thought we had died and gone to heaven. We had never made that kind of money before and it took care of our whole string of horses for a year and half."

If you're wondering about the name, Barbara can explain.

"I name all the horses," she says. "When we bought her, we had partners and I didn't go to the sale. I got an ultimatum from the three people who were there at the time to pick out 10 names and all of them had to have the word 'blonde.' So I gave them the ten names and we whittled it down to Shesnaturalblonde."

Shesnaturalblonde was bought jointly by the Wrights and trainer Bill Tharrenos for \$21,000. She raced 17 times, winning 5. Her final victory came on June 3, 2016. Jeffrey Alderson brought the filly off the pace to win by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a length in a \$62,300 allowance race at 7 furlongs.

"She ran 3<sup>rd</sup> to Lexie Lou," Barbara points out. "That was in the Victoriana Stakes, and she was beaten by about 3 lengths. We think she bowed a tendon in that race and raced only one more time."

Lexie Lou was the wonderful filly who took down the 2014 Queen's Plate, as well as the Wonder Where Stakes, the Nassau Stakes, and the Dance Smartly Stakes.

When her racing career ended, Shesnaturalblonde was sold as a broodmare to Frank Stronach for \$15,000.

"We bought her first foal as a yearling off Stronach," says Jim. "And Billy's got it in the barn now."

"Blondeonamission," adds Barbara. "She's 3 years old. She hasn't started yet. She got injured when she was a baby and we're nursing her along."

Another horse named by Barbara is Whatswrongwithyou. "That one is named after Billy," she laughs.

"We looked at her at the sale," says Jim. "And Billy and I were sitting there, and I said, 'This poor horse, nobody wants it.' And we said, 'Well buy it.' So we bought it for \$2,500 and it got cleaned off of us for \$25,000 by Valerie Thompson after it ran 2<sup>nd</sup> in her 2<sup>nd</sup> race."

The Wrights got a nice start to their season when Hidden Identity, a three-year-old filly, made her racing debut a winning one on opening day, June 12, at Woodbine. With Emma-Jayne Wilson apparently just along for the ride,

Hidden Identity destroyed her 11 opponents, getting to the wire 11 lengths the best in the fine time of :58.26 for 5 furlongs. The win price was \$12.

"We bought her at the CTHS sale in 2019 for \$17,000 with Bill Tharrenos as our partner," says Barbara. "She was ready to run at the end of 2020, but then they shut down."

"We watched that race from our living room," says Jim. "We were jumping up and down."

The trainer, Tharrenos, purposely put Hidden Identity into a field that appeared inferior to the filly. The point was to bolster the horse's confidence and the idea sure worked.

"We knew what was going on," says Jim. "Billy and the groom and I all bet pretty good on her."

The Wrights had a very good experience with a relatively inexpensive claim.

"Last year we owned Lapochka with Billy," says Barbara. "We claimed him December 2019, for \$7,500 and he did very well for us. He won 4 times for us, and we lost him for \$19,000 last year in October."

Lapochka, after being claimed at Woodbine, won at a mile at Gulfstream, then at 6  $\frac{1}{2}$  at Woodbine, and then twice at a mile and a 16<sup>th</sup>, the last win at the \$15,000 claim level.

The Wrights are probably in the best space with Tharrenos as their trainer. Tharrenos likes to emphasize putting a horse where it can win, not where dreams of glory take you.

"Philosophically, I think Jim and Billy think a lot alike about running a horse where it belongs," says Barbara. "We've always felt it better to run for \$10,000, than to run a horse at 25 where it doesn't belong and comes last. That's no fun. So it's about talking it over and picking the right spot for them and reading the condition book."

There has been modest success for J & B Wright Racing, but Barbara cautions that it's not a magic route to wealth and fame.

"If you're into this game to make money as small owners, it's very difficult," she says. "It's all about the environment and the atmosphere. We love the horses. You have to love it for what it is, and I think that's really what keeps people like us going. The horses are so undemanding and honest. Jim has always had the passion."



**WOODBINE**  
MOHAWK PARK  
presented by WEG

On Tuesday, June 24, the 2<sup>nd</sup> race at Mohawk was for 2-year-old fillies, and was the first race of the year at that track for any 2-year-olds. American Ticket, racing for the first time, was ignored by the bettors and went off at 19-1. But thanks to a smart drive from Phil Hudon, American Ticket sat second most of the way, came out in the stretch and, with a final quarter of :27.1, won by 1 ¼ lengths in 1:54.3. American Ticket paid \$40.40. The filly is trained by Blake McIntosh, who with partner, Ozzie MacKay, operates Blake and Ozzie Stables, which co-owns this filly with a few other partners.

“We’ve been going in on horses together probably 4 or 5 years,” says MacIntosh. “We were at Harrisburg one day and we went in on a colt and we just branched out from there. We’ve probably owned ten or twelve together, maybe more. I think the first ones we owned together were Ubettergogo and Twin B Peaches.”

Ubettergogo won 6 of 18 starts, hit the board the 11 times, and earned \$178,469 (U.S.). On September 8, 2017, she won a \$54,000 New York Sires Stakes race at Batavia. In 2018, Ubettergogo took down a NYSS race at Saratoga for \$60,200, as well as one for \$39,500 back at Batavia. That win in July would be the last time she found the winner’s circle.

“She hurt herself in the middle of her 3-year-old season,” says MacIntosh. “She went a mile in 1:50 as a 3-year-old and looked like a real nice filly. But she ended up breaking a knee, so we had to retire her and sell her at Harrisburg as a broodmare.”

Twin B Peaches was also a filly that had a nice start, but a disappointing endgame. In just her 3<sup>rd</sup> lifetime start, she set a mark of 1:52, winning a NYSS at Vernon Downs, and in April of 2018, she won 3 consecutive starts at Woodbine.

“Twin B Peaches was okay,” says MacIntosh, “But as a 3-year-old, she just didn’t come back as good as she had been as a 2-year-old.”

“This year we own Somewhereinverona together,” he continues. “He’s a 3-year-old who won in 1:49.4 at Pocono in June. He was second in a Stallion Series a week later. He’s shown some promise. He’s a big colt and he’ll get better as we go along.”

Somewhereinverona is a son of Somebeachsomewhere and has recorded 3 wins and 9 in-the-money results from his first 18 races.

Having American Ticket win first time out was, of course, satisfying to MacIntosh.



Ozzie MacKay (l) and Blake MacIntosh (c) with Greg Blanchard

“Ticket has really improved over the last little bit, and I think she will do well in the New York Sire Stakes later this summer,” he says.

When it comes to picking and paying for horses, MacIntosh says it’s usually up to him. American Ticket was a \$37,000 purchase in Lexington.

“I always pick them out,” he says. “Ozzie called me right away when I bought her and wanted in. I always pick out the babies. A lot of people will suggest one and I will look at it, but 9 times out of 10, it’s what I like and what I see.”

MacIntosh, 46, inherited his love of harness horses from his father.

“My dad, Wayne, owned horses and he would harness a couple of them after work and I would help. I dropped out of university in my first year and said, ‘Dad, I want to go to Windsor and train horses’, and 20 years later, I’m still doing it.”

MacIntosh names Courtly Choice as the best horse he has ever owned, and the record makes it hard to dispute. Now a 6-year-old, Courtly Choice won 16 of 47 starts and earned \$1,432,607. On July 14, he won the \$500,000 Meadowlands Pace, cutting out a career best mile in 1:47.1 for driver David Miller. Two months later, Miller and Courtly Choice combined to win the Little Brown Jug with a 1:49.4 time in the final. On August 31, 2019, James MacDonald drove Courtly Choice to a mind-blowing 34-1 shocker in the \$525,000 Canadian Pacing Derby at Woodbine. Those are three very impressive lines to have on your resumé.

We got an interesting answer when we asked which drivers MacIntosh likes to have steering his stock.

“There’s 3 main guys I use: Jody Jamieson, Doug McNair and James MacDonald,” he says. “I pick who I think is best suited for the horse and how I want it driven. But there’s no set driver. If one screws up one week, they’re more than likely to get fired.”

As cruel as that sounds, it’s just part of the politics of horse racing.

“It’s a business,” he adds. “They’ll jump off your

horse for someone else’s if they think that horse is better. If someone doesn’t fit a horse, you have to go with the guy who you feel is going to do the best for you on that particular horse.”

It’s pointed out that it was Phil Hudon who guided American Ticket to that upset win.

“Jody had one of Dave Menary’s in there,” explains MacIntosh. It was an Ontario Sire horse. Phil’s been driving here and there for us. I listed him on it, and he gave it a great drive.”

MacIntosh is very pleased to finally have fans back at Mohawk.

“It’s a big thing, because your owners and your partners are going to come watch their horse,” he says. “They’ve invested a lot of money into these horses, and they want to come to the track and feel like they’re part of it and get their picture taken. Having the fans there is nice, hearing the crowd. I’m sure the drivers enjoy it.”

MacIntosh has never been tempted to drive his horses in a race. He has a couple good reasons.

“I’m too fat,” he says with a giggle. “I weigh 225-230. And I have too much of a temper. I have a very bad temper. It blows over after 5 minutes. But it would not be a good situation with me on the track.”

One thing that he doesn’t blow his stack over is Mohawk. He loves the track, the layout, and the management.

“We race there five nights a week. It’s a great facility,” he says. “WEG management does an unreal job for us, and people don’t realize how good we have it in Ontario.”

And what is it that keeps Blake MacIntosh in the sport? “The thrill. The competition,” he says. “I have always been a competitive person. The thrill of going to the track and winning a race. Just dreaming of having that next champion. I remember thinking, ‘If I only had one horse good enough for the Woodbine circuit’. You get that one horse and think, ‘I just want one horse to win the Open’. You get that horse and think, ‘I just want to win one Stakes race’. It’s in your veins. You always want that next one. To win the North America Cup. To win the Fan Hanover. To win the Metro. You’re looking for that horse every year.”

## Quarter Horse Owner of the Month: Milena Kwecien



For someone who couldn't be at the track on June 16, quarter horse owner Milena Kwecien had a great day at Ajax Downs. Her 3-year-old gelding, Countryfried Chicken, carried Helen Vanek to victory in the first race of the season. And two races later, Favorite Pearl, a 6-year-old mare, galloped the unique Kwecien silks into the winner's circle, while giving Rachael Isaacs her first career riding win.

"We went to Ajax Downs way back when One Kool Wave was Horse of the Year," says Kwecien, when asked how she got into the sport. "I've always loved thoroughbreds, and my husband, Glenn, was more into the quarter horses and the western events. So we decided we will compromise, maybe get some racing quarter horses, and right off the bat, I really got into it. I purchased a little filly off a Mennonite. We ended up taking that little filly to Jason Pascoe, but she was unable to race because she had a breathing obstruction. We decided not to race her, but she got me an introduction to Jason and thanks to his integrity and honesty, I was totally sold on this sport. He's pretty much the reason why I got into it."

Kwecien and her husband bought a broodmare called Victorious Snow. That one didn't get to the races, but two of her babies did. When they purchased the mare, she was in foal to Wild Boys.

"Then we bred her to Iced N Oak, Greg Watson's stallion, and we got Ice N Snow out of her," says Kwecien. "He was ok, not a superstar or anything. He was very difficult to handle, kind of a brute. Actually, I did not even like him. He was one of the reasons, I ventured out to Oklahoma to see if I could find quality horses that I could breed and run and enjoy that would be a little more classy."

In 2016, Kwecien bought 4 horses in Oklahoma. They were Denali Teller Off, Ls Prince, Valiant Stoli Time and LA Wanda, who is the mom of Countryfried Chicken.

So which of those 4 was the most successful?

"I would say Denali Teller Off," answers Kwecien. "She was our first big Stakes winner when she won the Alex Picov Futurity as a 2 year-old."

On October 10, 2016, the Alex Picov Futurity at 400 yards had a purse of \$119,115 U.S. Denali Teller Off was ridden by Ramiro Castillo and she shocked the bettors, winning by a neck at almost 24-1. She covered the distance in 20.340 for a speed index of 89.

The winner's share of that race was \$41,660, a huge return considering the filly's modest purchase price.

"Yes, kind of like a Disney story," laughs Kwecien. "We paid just \$4,500 for her."

What was it like on opening day for Kwecien, having to watch the races at home and seeing them win?

"It was great. It was really exciting," she says. "Jason has done such a great job getting them ready. So I knew that had a bit of an edge on everybody else but yeah, that's super exciting, especially for Pearl."



It's here in the interview that Kwecien lets us in on something pretty rare.

"Favorite Pearl had a baby last year," she says.

Go run to the record books. How many mares give birth, then come back to win races? The sample size is very small.

"She took a bunch of time off of racing but it was great to see her back," adds Kwecien. "The weanling was a March foal. So we were able to run her twice last year and got two thirds at the very end of the year. I was always going to bring her back this year. Her issue was that she was a little immature for her age. It took her a long time and she's such a big horse, just massive. Having a baby really helped her and the baby looks just like her. He's a massive colt and he's going to be great."

It's not just her mare that has been in the breeding shed, then returned to the racetrack.

"My two stallions are racing this year," says Kwecien. "They're pretty unique that I can breed them and then run them successfully. That's pretty rare."

Kwecien had her two stallions racing on the second Wednesday of action at Ajax Downs, and it was obvious their breeding shed requirements weren't distracting them.

Maryland Magic, a 7-year-old horse, cruised home by an easy length in the 6<sup>th</sup> race, going 300 yards in 15.382, good for an 85 speed index, as he improved his lifetime record to 10 wins from 36 tries. Under jockey Helen Vanek, Maryland Magic paid just \$2.70. Earlier in the card, in race 1, his two-year-old son, Blazin Magician, finished second, and was timed at 15.533, which means Dad still has a step or two on Junior.

Kwecien's other stallion, Spy For The Senate, was very tough in race 8 on June 23. The feature race, at 250 yards for a purse of \$19,000, included the last two Ajax

Downs Horses of the Year, Feisty Icon and Had To Be Ivory. Spy For The Senate and Vanek went off at 5-1 and, in a furious 4-horse finish, won by a nose in 15.239, which earned a 101 speed index. That was win 9 in race 30 for Spy For The Senate.

"I would have to say, Spy For The Senate is my favourite all-time quarter horse," asserts Kwecien. "He's a sweetheart and was born on February 12, my birthday. I got him as a weanling and raised him here. So I had time to get to know him, and he is just an amazing horse. He was standing in the aisle at the sale and I fell in love with him right off the bat. And he's just been such an incredible athlete. Actually he's my top earning horse."

Kwecien's silks have a shoutout to Canada that people at quarter horse tracks south of us have grown to appreciate.

"I have a lot of horses with the name 'Snow' in it and my silks have a snowflake on them," she says. "So in the States, people recognize that and know we're from Canada because we've got the cold emblem on the silks."

As for the elements that make quarter horse racing something she loves doing every day:

"Obviously, seeing your horses win is very exciting and rewarding, considering the fact that I'm pretty hands-on," she says. "I get to know them and that really keeps it going for me."

Kwecien reiterates that having a great trainer really matters to her.

"Jason Pascoe is the best trainer for sure, hands down," she says. "We have a great relationship and I just love the way he is with the horses and how he takes care of them. So I don't have to worry about their well-being, mental or physical, so that that's what has kept me going over the years."

# Winning in bunches



Doug McNair

With as many as 25 skilled drivers gathering at Mohawk each racing night, you'd think the wins would be fairly distributed. But the 6 racing cards that spanned June 12-19 showed that the cream – or in this case – the best drivers rise to the top. On Saturday, June 12, James MacDonald drove home 4 winners. He produced Mary Kat (\$6.40) for trainer Shawn Steacy,



Jody Jamieson

Utred (\$8.80) for Carmen Auciello, Refi (\$8.90) a Ben Baillargeon trainee and Beyond Better (\$4.20), a 4 year-old gelding prepped by Robert McIntosh.

That 4-bagger appeared to be the gauntlet, because on Monday, June 14, it was the Doug McNair show. Held out of the winners circle for the first 6 races, McNair won the 7<sup>th</sup> with Southwind Avenger (\$4.20), trained by Duane. Marfisi, the 8<sup>th</sup> with the Gregg McNair trained Jimmy Connor B (\$2.20), the 9<sup>th</sup> with Treasured Tee (\$13.40) for Richard Moreau and the 10<sup>th</sup> with Memo (\$9.40) also trained by Moreau. The all Doug McNair Pick-4 returned \$106.30. Incredibly, it would not be the only time that week a driver won 4 in a row.

The next evening, it was Jody Jamieson humming (\$17.90) to a first race win for trainer Carmen Auciello, then won the 3<sup>rd</sup> with Queso Relleno (\$3.80) and the 4<sup>th</sup> with bomber, Muscle Jack (\$78.30), each of those two trained by Blake McIntosh and then Jamieson captured the 7<sup>th</sup> with Turning the Table (\$5.00), a David Menary trained filly.

On Thursday night, before the races, MacDonald, McNair and Jamieson were spit-balling about which driver might be next for a 4-win night.

“Me, Louis-Philippe Roy, Doug and Jody are all in the same trailer,” said MacDonald. “So we were kind of joking that it was Louis’ turn and he came up just short.”

Yeah, normally a driver winning 3 on a night is quite an accomplishment. Roy scored with HP Running Mass (\$23.90) a 3 year-old trained by Jean Tourigny, then he won with Cantstoppingly (\$11) for Nick Galluci and with Power Train (\$3.60) also for Galluci. But that triple was eclipsed by another stunning night of work from MacDonald who won 5 races from his 7 assignments.

MacDonald won with Gaudi Kir (\$5.50) for trainer Steve Labonte, Tanzanite Trixx (\$12.80) trained by Jason McGinnis, Warrawee Whisper (\$11.20) for Sean Steacy, Mikey Camden (\$8.40) trained by Corey Johnson and Western Wish (\$7.50) another Auciello trainee. Afterwards, MacDonald wasn't even sure how many times he'd won 5 on a card.

“Five is the most I have won,” he said. “I'm not 100% sure, but I think this is the third time I have done it.”

He won't forget the week he won 5 races twice on a card, but first, on to Friday night and whose turn was it to dominate the card? How about Sylvain Filion? Filion connected with Hp Mama B (\$6.30) for trainer Baillargeon, Ourlittlemiracle (\$3.50) for Robert Fellows, Nice Kitty Hanover (\$17.00) trained by Galluci and Voelz Delight (\$4.50) for Baillargeon. And it should be noted,

those wins all came consecutively from races 3-6.

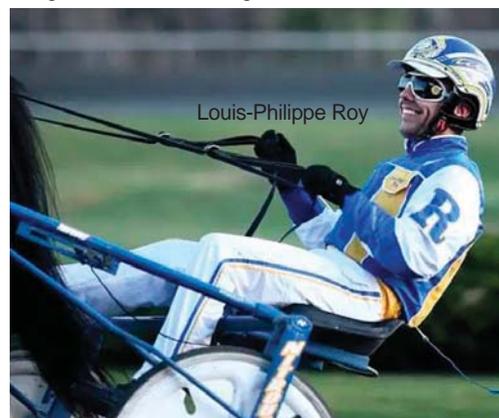
So maybe by now, you're asking yourself, what are the odds of 6 straight cards of racing in which a single driver wins 4 races? We don't know the answer to that, but we do know that on Saturday, June 19, Doug McNair and James MacDonald staged a harness racing slugfest. McNair got



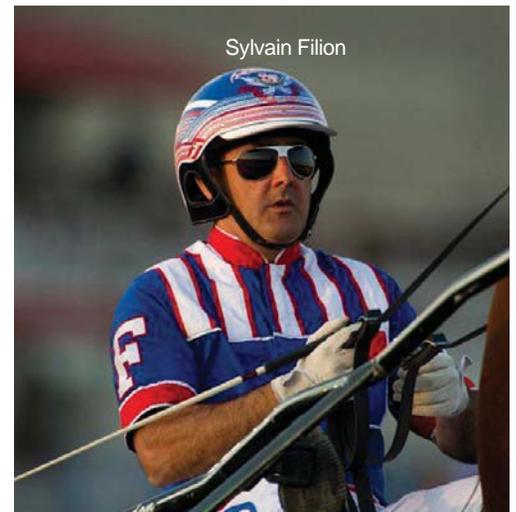
his picture taken with Grandma Heidi (\$2.70) trained by Richard Moreau, Whitecookie (\$4.60) for Tony O'Sullivan, Mongolian Hero (\$6.30), again for Sullivan and Wheels on Fire (\$4.60) for Moreau. While that was transpiring, MacDonald was victorious with No Free Lunch (\$5.00) trained by Harry Poulton, Second Bruiser (\$5.40) for Vernon Cochrane, Mary Kat (\$5.90) trained by Steacy, and Highlandbeachlover (\$21.40) for Auciello.

So both McNair and Macdonald had 4 wins on the night...but we're not done. They each had drives in the 11<sup>th</sup> and final race on the card. McNair and 68-1 shot Kwik Talking were not a factor, but in the stretch, MacDonald had Pointomygranson battling Jamieson and the 11 year-old Nickle Bag. The two horses hit the wire together and after a few minutes, the stewards declared a dead heat. Pointomygranson is trained by Chantal Mitchell and paid \$6.70 to win.

And for someone who has been watching horse races since the 60s, I can say that I have never seen a week like that!



Louis-Philippe Roy



Sylvain Filion

# Sutherland Hits 1,100



Chantal Sutherland rode Anonymous Source to an upset win in the 3<sup>rd</sup> race at Gulfstream on June 13, and with that, posted her 1,100<sup>th</sup> career win as a jockey. Off at 16-1, Anonymous Source got an excellent ride from Sutherland, who had the 4-year-old filly 7<sup>th</sup> out of 8 down the backstretch during the mile and a 16<sup>th</sup> grass race for maidens. Around the far turn, Sutherland took

Anonymous Source 5-wide, and with terrific momentum, the pair swooped all the runners in front of them, barrelled down the stretch and hit the wire the best by a length. Anonymous Source is trained by Kathy Mongeon and owned by Cuvette Racing Corp, and the win ticket was worth \$34.

Sutherland is quite popular at the Hallandale, Florida

track, which is where she has landed after stints in California and Kentucky. After that particular win, she was approached several times by fans asking for selfies. Not only did Sutherland oblige, but she also gave props to the trainer who assigned her to the landmark win.

"I'm very grateful to Kathy and all the trainers who are supporting me. I love Gulfstream. Everyone is amazing," said Sutherland. "This is a special day to win 1,100 because it's Sunday. I went to church this morning. I was hoping, but I didn't ask for it. I just said I want to have a safe, wonderful day."

Sutherland, now 45 years old, was born in Winnipeg, and grew up in Brampton. She began her professional riding career in 2000 at Woodbine, and by 2004 was challenging the best riders at Laurel, Calder, Gulfstream, and Aqueduct. In 2007, she could be found in California, winning races with regularity at Santa Anita. She has returned to Woodbine from time to time and has even retired a couple of times. From 2017 to 2020, she rode mostly at The Fair Grounds, then found herself at Churchill and Keeneland towards the end of 2020.

Her decision to ride at Gulfstream seems solid. The win with Anonymous Source was her 17<sup>th</sup> in 140 rides, for a strike rate of 12%.

"I love it here. It feels a lot like L.A.," said Sutherland "I feel like California is really my home, but not much anymore. I love Canada, but it's too cold."

## REGISTER TO ATTEND LIVE RACING AT AJAX DOWNS RACETRACK

**No entry without pre-registration**

**Limited space available – Register 48 hours before race days  
at [www.ajaxdowns.com](http://www.ajaxdowns.com)**

**Watch Wager  
& WIN**

**WEDNESDAYS  
FIRST RACE AT 1:30pm**



**[www.HPIBET.com](http://www.HPIBET.com) or [ajaxdowns.com/live-streaming](http://ajaxdowns.com/live-streaming)**

Follow Us On:   

**[www.ajaxdowns.com](http://www.ajaxdowns.com)**

# James MacDonald's first 5-bagger (this year!)



James Macdonald

Jody Jamieson steered 4 winners at Mohawk on Monday, June 14, so James MacDonald felt he needed to do Jamieson one better. On Thursday night, MacDonald won 5 of the 10 races on the Mohawk Card.

The sensational night began in race 4. MacDonald gunned the 4-year-old gelding, Gaudi Kir, right to the front from post 7 and led all the way, winning by 6 lengths in 1:52.4. Gaudi Kir is owned by Erin McLeary, Guy Labonte and Chantal Gravel and the trainer is Steve Labonte. Gaudi Kir produced a \$5.50 win ticket.

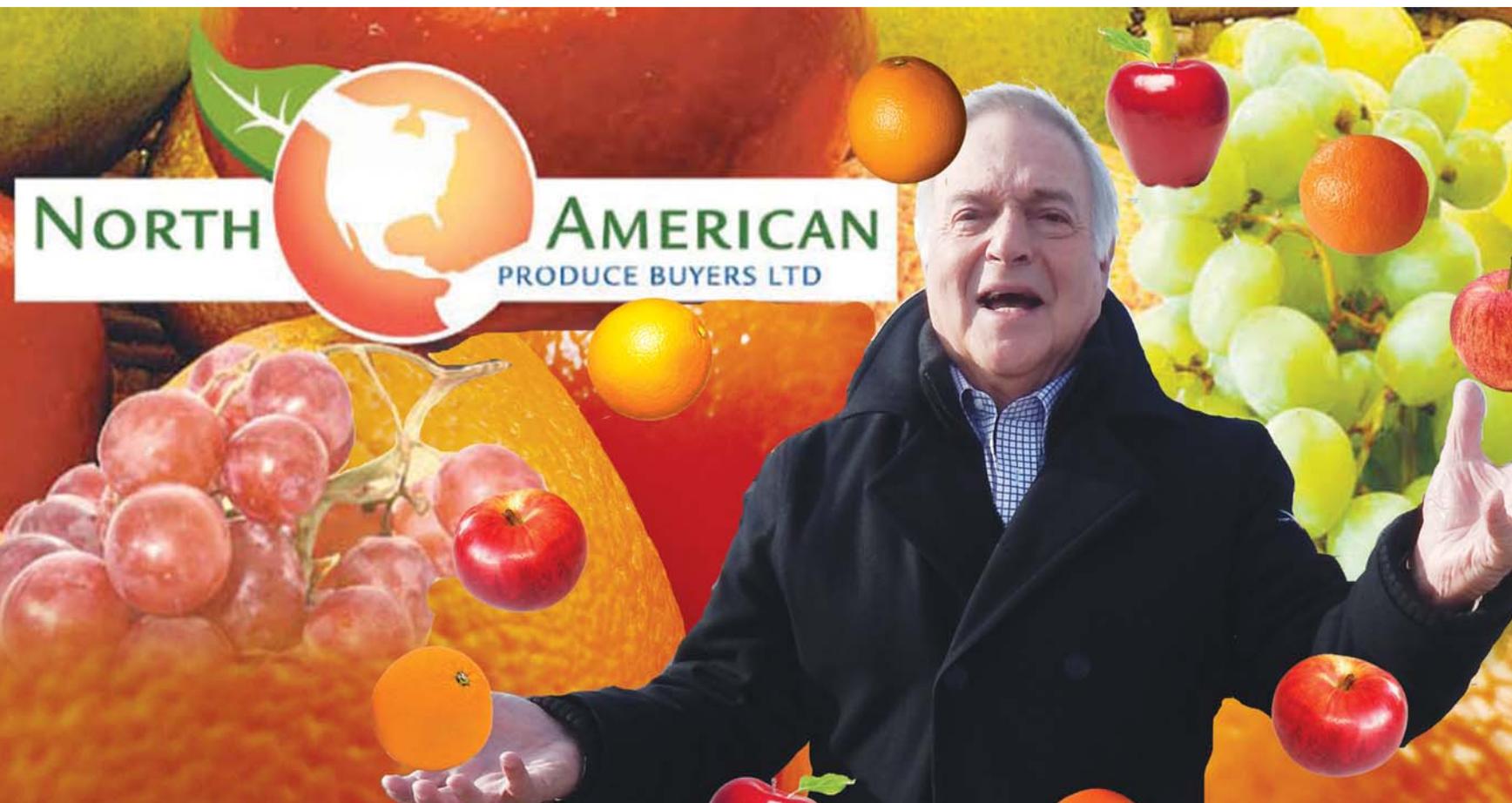
In race 6, a trot, MacDonald was behind 5-1 shot, Tanzanite Trixx. He raced that one from on top as well, getting to the wire 2 lengths the best in 1:57.3. Tanzanite Trixx is a 3-year-old filly, trained by Jason McGinnis for Thestable.ca, and she paid \$12.80 to win.

It was an off-the-pace win in race 8 for MacDonald and the 3-year-old trotting gelding, Warrawee Whisper. MacDonald rallied from 3<sup>rd</sup>

after  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile to win by a length in 1:57.3. Warrawee Whisper is trained by Sean Steacy and owned by Mark Steacy, Natasha Rivest and Dr. Michael Wilson, and that one paid \$11.20.

MacDonald's 4<sup>th</sup> win came with the 9-year-old pacer, Mikey Camden who won for the 17<sup>th</sup> time in 54 starts, stopping the clock in 1:51.2, the fastest mile of his life. Mikey Camden belongs to Debbie Element, Raymond Hushka and Penrith Cumbria and is trained by Corey Johnson. The win ticket was worth \$8.40.

James MacDonald's awesome night was topped with a win in race 10. The 3-year-old pacing filly, Western Wish, was 5<sup>th</sup> at the half, 3<sup>rd</sup> on the outside around the far turn, and with a final quarter of :28.1, she surged to the front, winning by 2 lengths in 1:52. Western Wish is trained by Carmen Auciello and owned by Aaron Waxman, Frank Cirillo and Santo Vena and she paid \$7.60. That equalled 5 wins on the night for MacDonald and he produced the all-James MacDonald pick-3, which paid \$99.45.



NORTH

AMERICAN  
PRODUCE BUYERS LTD

HOWARD DAVIDSON OF NORTH AMERICAN PRODUCE WELCOMES HORSE RACING FANS BACK TO THE TRACK.

Comparing thoroughbreds to standardbreds is like comparing apples to oranges.

And we know a lot about that!

# Weyburn, Canada's best three-year-old, is not a certainty for the Plate



With the Queen's Plate scheduled for August 22, there may still be some candidates rising to prominence. But, if you had to establish odds, Chiefswood Stables' Weyburn, bred and owned by Robert and Mark Krembil, would have to be rated no higher than 4-5. That's because his resumé towers over all the other eligible Canada-bred 3-year-olds. Weyburn has never raced at Woodbine, but his work in the U.S., especially in 2021, is brilliant.

Weyburn started his 3-year-old season in the deep end of the pool, running in the \$300,000 Gotham Stakes at a mile at Aqueduct on March 6. With Trevor McCarthy aboard, Weyburn went off at more than 46-1 in the field of 8. McCarthy had the son of Pioneerof The Nile in second place for most of the race, dove to the rail for the final 16<sup>th</sup>, and just nosed out Crowded Trade (Eric Cancel) at the wire for the win. Weyburn paid \$95.50.

Robert Landry is the General Manager for Chiefswood, and he loved that race.

"I was at home watching the race on TV," says Landry. "Obviously, we thought the horse had a shot. Did we think he would win? No. But he had trained really well. We had entered him into an allowance race and the allowance race didn't go. And that's why we went to the Gotham."

On June 13, Weyburn ran in the \$150,000 Pegasus Stakes at Monmouth Park. The distance was a mile and a sixteenth, and the 1-5 favourite was Mandaloun, famously second to Medina Spirit in the Kentucky Derby (and still waiting to learn if he will be elevated to the win position). Jockey Dylan Davis kept

Weyburn close, took the lead around the far turn, and then had to battle Mandaloun down the stretch. At one point, Mandaloun was close to a length in front, but in the final 50 yards, Weyburn surged back and was just a diminishing neck behind at the wire.

"He ran a tremendous race," says Landry. "I was really excited about his effort. We really believe this horse has a lot of talent. He hasn't really run a bad race. It would have been really nice to beat Mandaloun, but he showed that he fits with those types."

So with those two excellent races in his past performance chart, Weyburn in the Plate would excite a lot of bettors. But when asked if the horse is a definite for the Queen's Plate, Landry's response was unequivocal.

"No," says Landry firmly. "The plan is now, if everything goes well, to point him to the Jim Dandy at Saratoga. I believe it's July 31<sup>st</sup>. Now if he happens to not keep pace with those horses, we do have the option of coming back in 22 days to the Queen's Plate. But if he runs well in the Jim Dandy, we would point him at the Travers Stakes."

There's considerable prestige in winning Canada's most important race for 3-year-olds. But Chiefswood Stables is running a business, and taking down a major Stakes race at Saratoga has huge financial implications.

"We're eventually hoping that he could be a stud," explains Landry. "Winning the Queens Plate isn't going to help his value in the U.S., and our ultimate goal is to stand him in the U.S. If he could win the Jim Dandy or run respectably enough, then we could take a shot at the Travers. I think the Travers carries a lot of



weight when horses go to stud. So that's our ultimate goal, and obviously, if things don't work in the Jim Dandy, then we have the option of running in the Plate."

Let's go back to the Pegasus at Monmouth. New Jersey has very strict rules about the use of the whip. Landry was watching his horse go head-to-head with a terrific rival, while the entire time, Dylan Davis was forbidden to use his crop.

"I found that very frustrating," says Landry, who rode thoroughbreds for 30 years. "I do know that this horse would like a little encouragement. I totally disagree with not being able to hit them at all to encourage them. The whips today are the Gentle Touch. They don't hurt them. I don't believe in pounding on a horse and beating them all up. But sometimes a horse will respond if you tap him on the shoulder or hit him on the butt. It doesn't have to be hard. It pushes them forward. It gives them that little jump in my opinion. It's hard to watch races when your every jurisdiction is different."

If Weyburn does run in the Plate, he will be performing on a synthetic surface for the first time.

"He's a nice moving horse," says Landry. "I don't think he would have a problem with any surface, but we're looking at staying in the US, and it's going to be up to Weyburn to let us know where to go. If he isn't real competitive in the Jim Dandy, then he's probably going to the Queen's Plate. That'll be the conversation after the next race. I'd

much prefer to see him going to the Travers, and I'm sure the Krembil family would as well."

It's not only the Krembil family that's invested here. Weyburn's family is also counting on him, according to Landry.

"You remember Yorkton?" asks Landry. "He's a half-brother to Weyburn – they both have the same dam, Sunday Affair. He was a sprinter, and he stood at stud for the first time this year. We have him at Crestwood in Lexington and he ended up getting 52 mares. Being the son of Speightstown really helps. Every time Weyburn does something, it's going to help him. It's going to enhance his value."

## Woodbine's New *Slant* on Racing



The number 10 has always been held as model of perfection. Ten out of ten is the best score you can get on all those lame Facebook trivia quizzes. Every important list is ultimately a top-10. Bo Derek, justifiably, was the perfect 10. But post 10 in harness racing is as imperfect as it gets. For many years, the 10-spot was as far out on the track as you could get at Mohawk, and the numbers told the sad story – getting post 10 meant your chances of winning were miniscule. So a few years ago, Mohawk started putting post 10 behind the 1-horse. The optics seemed good – a rail start instead of a wide beginning. But at best, that solution was a mixed bag. Some of the horse people hated the idea and Bill McLinchey, Director of Harness Racing for Woodbine since 2017, admits the move to the rail didn't really produce the results that were hoped for.

"Having the 10 trailing was something our racing secretary Scott McKelvie wanted to try," says McLinchey. "He really felt that once guys drew the 10-hole, their race was over before it even started. Scoring behind the 1 gave them a better chance of getting away, so we thought we would try it. It did win some races. Our main goal was always trying to keep the odds board as level as possible. So if we could take that 10-horse from being

40-1 and drop down to 15 or 20-1, we thought we were doing our job. Horse people were pretty open to that – they're open to change. Bill O'Donnell of COSA is great to work with. But as time went on, our numbers showed that the more races we ran with the 10 trailing didn't really allow the 10 to win more races and it didn't significantly lower the odds. And then we were in the position where we were purchasing a new starting gate. So why not try the slanted gate, go back 10-wide, give that whirl? Our ultimate goal is always to make sure the 9 and the 10 have a fair shot."

The slanted starting gate gives the outer horses a break. They actually can score ahead of the inside horses. Carmen Auciello, who has been battling Richard Moreau for leading trainer status in 2021 has been warming up to the idea of a tilted gate.

"The new gate really favours the outside horses, especially if you want to put their nose on the gate and roll them out of there," says Auciello. "If you're looking at horses from the 5, 6, 7 or 8-post that have gate speed, this gate really favours them – you're literally getting a 2-length head start verses the 1, 2 or 3. That can really help a horse that has good gate speed and wants to go to the front."

Horses forced to follow the 1-horse had their racing possibilities severely cramped. It was impossible to gun to the lead and if the 1-horse didn't have any early speed, the trailer inevitably found itself in the back third of the field before the quarter. Jody Jamieson was very clear about the idea of having to drive a horse from the trailing position. He hated it.

"I can't tell you the number of times I was going to the gate with the 10-horse following the number 1 horse, thinking I'd be so much better off if I could be 10-wide,"

says Jamieson. "I was very happy that they switched back to 10-wide. It's definitely more fair. It's too much to ask a horse to start two lengths behind the field. I understand that the idea is that the 10-horse has a better chance and gets more money bet, but in my opinion, it doesn't have a better chance when it trails. At the end of the day, we're all starting 10 across and it's better than the alternative."

The early returns at Mohawk are inconclusive. On the first night of racing, there were 7 races with full 10-horse fields, and not one horse starting from post 10 even hit the board. On the second night, James MacDonald took the four-year-old mare, Mary Kat, to the top from post 10, led all the way, and still had a :27 final quarter to win handily at odds of 2.20-1. In race 4, the #10 horse was He's Swift. But after a scratch, the four-year-old gelding got a great start from post 9, led the field all the way, and won at odds of 47-1 for Jonathan Drury and trainer Auciello. Then in race 5, Louis-Philippe Roy gunned East End to the lead from post 10 and that was the winning move as East End scored by over a length in 1:51, paying \$6.00.

What's reassuring is that those running the show aren't afraid of changing things up to make the game fairer for all.



# ODDITIES & ENTITIES

## Graduating X 2

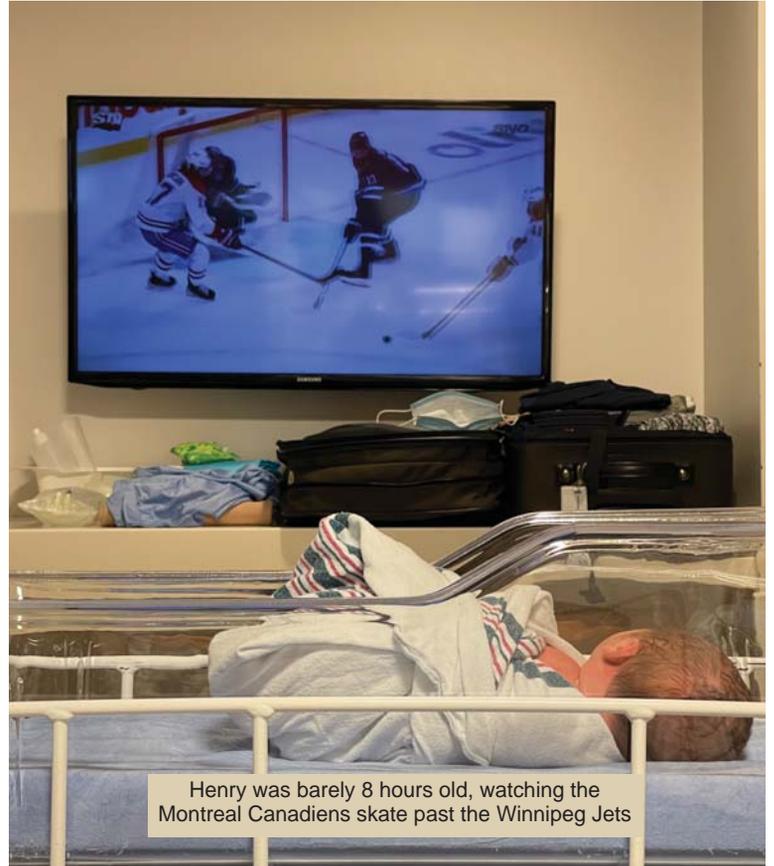
Jockey Ali Rivera graduated from high school on June 4. The next day, he was riding quarter horses at Sam Houston Race Park. The first race that day was 250 yards for maidens, and Rivera delivered the three-year-old gelding, Cw Cartersbabyspoon, to victory by a nose. So he graduated, and then the gelding graduated. Did both of them get a nice rolled up diploma?



This is something that happened 40 years ago, but probably hasn't happened since. This is a horse called Roscoe Zee on August 29, 1981, at the River Downs Racecourse (in Cincinnati before Belterra Park). Roscoe Zee slipped in the mud and fell just before the finish line. By inertia, he managed to cross the finish line, and since the jockey, Bernon Siler, did not touch the track, the victory was counted. Siler was heard singing,



It figures that Woodbine CEO's first grandson, Henry would be watching the playoffs just hours after he was born. Lawson was actually drafted by the Montreal Canadiens, before he foolishly abandoned a pro career to become a lawyer. New born Henry is the first child of Lawson's daughter Brodie and after the Canadiens defeated Winnipeg that night, he insisted that the nurses flip over to the Racing Channel.



Henry was barely 8 hours old, watching the Montreal Canadiens skate past the Winnipeg Jets



## And you wonder why they call them 'mounts.'

Here's another from the 'you-don't-see-that-on-a-racetrack-everyday' file.

At a racetrack in Japan one day in June, a colt, while looking over his rivals prior to the start of a race, fancied a fellow colt.

Unrestrained by his lust, the randy colt ditched his rider and went over to the other bloke saying, "It's time, baby!"

The first horse attempted to mount the second one. The recipient's rider immediately jumped off, allowing the romantic tryst to take its course.

However, the assaulted horse, named Roman Nature (by Deep Impact) wasn't in the mood and defended his honour with both of his back hooves.

Yes. Roman Nature belted him in his balls!



WAGER ON LIVE RACING  
WITH A HPIbet ACCOUNT

GET \$100\*

PLUS YOUR FIRST BET IS ON US!†



- Ability to Bet online or onsite, any time
- **FREE** to watch up to 4 live streams simultaneously
- Bet on over 500 tracks from around the world
- Receive HPIbet Rewards and much more!



LIVE RACING.  
HAPPENING NOW AT  
HPIbet.COM

JOIN FOR FRE TODAY.



Visit [HPIbet.com](https://HPIbet.com) and click Promotions to view full terms and conditions. Know when to take the reins. [ResponsibleGambling.org](https://ResponsibleGambling.org)