Backstretch With Gordon: Miami Valley

With the temperature finally breaking 32 degrees, Boss Kathy was nice enough to sign my field trip papers and send me to Miami Valley on Tuesday (Jan. 9) for the last of three days of the $25,000 North America Drivers Championship.

Thirty drivers paid their way in ($300) to participate, and after two days of battling on the track on Sunday and Monday, the top 10 in the standings stamped a ticket to the big dance on Tuesday. And when the last of eight contest races was deemed “official” around 5:45 p.m., it was Trace Tetrick who had captured the crown and the $10,000 grand prize.

Tetrick, who finished eighth in last year’s inaugural contest, was one of only two returning participants from 2017. The other was Doug McNair, who came down from Canada and won last year’s championship. Doug didn’t fare as well this time around as he finished sixth.

I left Lexington around 10:30 a.m. for the 90-minute drive north on I-75. When I arrived at Miami Valley I went directly to the office of Myles Linderman, who is usually a track judge but was asked to temporarily serve as director of operations. Myles gave me a program and told me he had reserved Table 6 for me in the grandstand.

There was a nice crowd on hand and the people seemed very appreciative of the drivers who came to town to compete. Thirty points went to the winner of each race, with 20 to second. Then it went 14-11-9-7-5-3-1. Only if you finished last did you not earn any points.

In addition to Tetrick and McNair, the field of 10 (pictured above) included reigning North American dash champion Aaron Merriman, Corey Callahan, Simon Allard, Louis Philippe-Roy, Billy Davis Jr., Chris Page, Jason Brewer and Peter Wrenn. The camaraderie among the drivers is great. To show his appreciation for the event, Allard rented a party bus on Monday night that headed to downtown Cincinnati, with stops including places to watch some of the Alabama-Georgia football game.

I watched the day’s first race from my table and then hopped into the truck for the ride to the paddock, where I was able to chat briefly with Page, Merriman, Callahan, McNair and Allard. Wrenn came by and said hello and then director of racing Gregg Keidel gathered everybody together for a group photo taken by Brad Conrad. Nine were ready but since Merriman had won Race 3 they had to wait. Aaron returned, they took the photo, then stepped away with their game faces came on.
One thing I believe is that while the competition is great for all contests like this, the races are very difficult to handicap. The drivers are behind horses they’ve never seen, and how can anybody try and handicap races with all those driver changes?

The challenge of handicapping those races showed right away in the first contest race (Race 4 on the card) as Allard, who had led the standings after two days but started out back at zero like his peers for the final, won with Real Revenge at odds of 107-1, returning $216.40.

I watched that race from the paddock and then hopped back on the truck, and when I got back to the grandstand I saw Wrenn’s wife, Melanie, who I asked to join me as I had an eight-seat table for just me. She did and we watched Page win the second contest race. As I looked at my program for the next race, Mel remarked something about Peter not having much chance with his 20-1 morning-line horse McArtic Ocean.

I told Mel that while Tetrick had driven the pacer the last two starts at Hollywood Dayton, he did finish third and fourth after stating from outside posts eight and seven. I thought the horse was better than the morning line and the toteboard, which showed 36-1. But as the race developed and Peter was locked midpack inside, it seemed hope was lost.

Then all of a sudden Peter was second-over with McArtic Ocean and Mel and I looked at each other and wondered how he got out. After going wide in the last turn, McArtic Ocean had enough left to get to the wire first. Mel went down to the winner’s circle, but as the photo was being taken the “objection” sign went up. I laughed to myself as I figured I was learning how Peter had gotten out of his boxed-in position. It was Roy who lodged the objection as the replays showed Wrenn moving over into his path. It was similar to the Hambletonian DQ, but since Roy’s horse didn’t break and flinched just slightly, the judges determined no violation and McArtic Ocean returned $74.80.

By the way, during the afternoon I posted results and updated standings on my personal Facebook page, of which Boss Kathy took and shared on the harnessracing.com Facebook page. Thanks to everyone who “liked” and commented about the postings.

Page won the next race with J-S Livethedream and took a comfortable lead. Actually, it seemed an unsurmountable lead. Even when Davis won the next race and then Tetrick scored a victory, it still seemed Page would hold on.

But then Tetrick won again. So with one race to go the contest was down to the leader Page, or Tetrick, who had zoomed all the way to second. And with Tetrick driving...
Dalianna, who was sent off the betting favorite in the finale, and Page behind 38-1 Desire One from the outside post 9, it made for an interesting scenario.

If Tetrick won with Dalianna, then Page had to finish second or third to remain on top. If Tetrick finished second, then all Page had to do was not finish last. If Tetrick finished third or worse, Page wins no matter.

Dalianna held the lead around the final turn but had pressure from the first-over ER Hilary and Callahan. But Dalianna held her ground and went on to the victory. With Page finishing next-to-last, Tetrick’s late hat trick catapulted him to the victory.

I immediately wondered about Page’s thoughts about being beaten for the all the marbles by Dalianna, a horse he usually drives.

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I immediately wondered about Page’s thoughts about being beaten for the all the marbles by Dalianna, a horse he usually drives. He could have still landed on Dalianna after the open draw, but that didn’t happen.

Trace had told me earlier in the day that he didn’t think wins would be that important and it was having high finishes and consistently picking up points that could lead to the title. But he needed all three of his late victories to take home the $10,000 grand prize.

Trace’s wife, Sandy, couldn’t make the trip but she texted me to tell her husband he did an awesome job. I texted back, “Phew! I thought at first you were going to tell me to give him a kiss for you!”

I waited for the photos to be taken and then spoke to Trace. By then a few fans had come by the winner’s circle, hoping for an autograph. Trace handed one lucky person his whip.

“For a lot of the day I was sitting ninth and I had a few late that came up strong,” Trace told me. “So I turned it around. I was lucky to get three in a row and I needed it.”

Trace, who capped off 2017 by being voted the Rising Star of the Year by the U.S. Harness Writers Association, said he knew the scenario going into the last race. He said his first thoughts, however, were about the race purse of $16,800.

“I thought I had the better horse and I was racing for the win,” he said. “The main thing was getting that money. It worked out. If I had finished second to Chris (Page) I would have been fine with that, but luckily I was able to get the top.”

I headed for the exit and my return trip to Lexington, but first hiked up the stairs to say hello to announcer Barry Vicroy and presiding judge John Yinger. I then bid adieu to Myles and Brad and called it day. A very nice day it was.
Northwood Bloodstock Agency

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The Devil’s In The Details Of New Integrity Policy

Last Friday’s announcement about a new integrity initiative by the Woodbine Entertainment Group (WEG) and the Meadowlands (plus Tioga Downs and Vernon Downs, which like the Meadowlands are owned and managed by Jeff Gural) spurred heated commentary on social media and in private conversations. Clay Horner, a Standardbred owner and chairman of the board of the Woodbine Entertainment Group, revealed after the press release that the new policy would call for the suspension of all of an owner’s horses (if they owned 25 percent or more of a horse) if one horse tested positive for a Class 1 or 2 substance, a steroid, or had a high blood-gas reading (TCO2).

Some of those posting on Facebook predicted that owners with reputable trainers would likely get out of the sport if their trainers were ensnared by an unexplainable or faulty positive test. Others questioned the fairness of a policy that would harm a trainer who had no positives, but trained a horse for an owner who had a horse with another trainer test positive.

There have been numerous cases of reputable trainers without a single violation on their records getting a “positive” Class 1 or Class 2 tests from what regulators have deemed “environmental” contamination, or from products which unknowingly contained substances which are prohibited.

The integrity policy was initiated by Clay Horner, a Standardbred owner and chairman of the board of the Woodbine Entertainment Group (WEG). Horner is a Standardbred owner and also a highly respected international lawyer in mergers and acquisitions. His work has included the $12.5 billion merger of Tim Hortons Inc. with Burger King, creating Restaurant Brands International, a new global powerhouse restaurant company based in Canada. He was also lead counsel to the “Wise Persons’ Committee” appointed to recommend the best securities regulatory system for Canada.

On Thursday morning (Jan. 11), Horner spoke about the new policy on the “Mike and Mike” podcast and shared that he has had lengthy conversations with 12 owners and/or trainers of a “significant number of stakes horses,” and is working on the details of the initiative.

“Jeff (Gural) and I have made it quite clear... that we were prepared to consider changes... provided they were consistent with our objectives.”

—Clay Horner

The Press Release Regarding Integrity

Woodbine Entertainment and the Meadowlands today (Jan. 5) announced the implementation of the Standardbred Racing Integrity and Accountability Initiative (SRIAI) for their 2018 racing seasons.

Inspired by rules set out at Thoroughbred racing’s Breeders’ Cup, the Standardbred Racing Integrity and Accountability Initiative is designed to strengthen integrity in the sport and to respect the significant investment of owners and sponsors in the funding of stakes races.

The SRIAI’s conditions apply to 2018 stakes events at Woodbine, Mohawk Park, the Meadowlands, Tioga Downs and Vernon Downs for all owners, trainers and horses.

“The new conditions will help ensure strengthened integrity at the participating tracks, specifically in the stakes races,” said Jeff Gural, Meadowlands Racetrack Chairman and CEO. “The entire sport, including owners, trainers, drivers and horseplayers will benefit from this important initiative, designed to inspire confidence from existing and new owners. We encourage other tracks to join us by adopting these new stakes conditions.”

The new stakes conditions prohibit any owner, trainer, or horse from participating in an added money event if they have been found by a racing regulatory agency to have tested positive for prohibited substances as defined within the Association of Racing Commissioners International Uniform Classification for Foreign Substances of Class 1, 2, TCO2 or steroids after January 1, 2018.

“Racing is well-monitored by the sport’s regulatory bodies in the United States and Canada and the participating tracks have an excellent record of racing product integrity, so fortunately, the number of positive tests is very, very low overall,” said Jessica Buckley, President, Woodbine, Mohawk Park. “By proactively updating the Standardbred Stakes Conditions, Woodbine Entertainment, The Meadowlands, and American Racing and Entertainment further demonstrate a continued commitment to ensuring a fair and safe racing environment to the benefit of everyone in the sport.”

The announcement is another collaboration between Woodbine Entertainment and the Meadowlands designed to advance transparency in harness racing.

“As industry leaders, we are working together to create added assurances for all racing participants,” said Ms. Buckley. “The intent of the SRIAI is to encourage owners to use the greatest discretion when choosing partners and trainers and to remind all horsepeople to be vigilant with their horses well being.”

Stakes races, including the Pepsi North America Cup and the Meadowlands Pace, are subject to the new rules. A detailed rundown of the new conditions and a list of stakes races can be found on the track websites or within the Stakes Conditions Books for each racetrack. (Woodbine)
Horner said the rules of the policy will be finalized before Feb. 15 stakes payments are due. While he didn’t want to “let the cat out of the bag,” he still expects the policy to penalize the owner of a horse with a positive that violates the policy. That owner’s interest in any horse racing in a Mohawk or Gural-track owned stakes would be excluded from earning purse money, and that purse amount instead paid out to other horses in the race.

Horner also mentioned a “two-strike” policy for owners. “You don’t build Rome in a day,” said Horner of fine-tuning the rules of the policy. “The most important thing is we get to the right and best objective.”

“Everyone says they agree with the intent; everyone agrees the owner should be punished,” added Gural, who will also be keeping certain trainers barred from participating in racing at all of his tracks exclusive of the new policy. “Clay and I are working on exactly how this will work. It’s not meant to destroy the breeding industry. I’m a breeder! This policy will be applied in a fair manner.”

Gural said he is frustrated that some owners flock to trainers who are banned.

“On the one hand, you’ve got to agree we’ve driven some honest people out of the business,” he continued. “How is it possible that someone who is not allowed to race at Jeff Gural’s tracks should see his stable get bigger? He should not have any horses!”

Gural used trainer Rene Allard, who ranked third in money-winnings in 2017 with $6.5 million, as an example. “Brice (Cote, security director and investigator for Gural’s tracks) caught Rene Allard milkshaking a horse. There was a representative of the USTA there with him. And we tested the horses in his barn too and they came back positive for cobalt,” Gural shared. “He was training like 40 horses then and now he might have 100. And not one racetrack owner has called me to ask why he’s barred at my tracks.”

Gural said he understands concerns about ensnaring reputable trainers and believes the new policy can be crafted to make sure that does not happen.

“I, myself have horses with 10 different trainers,” he noted. Gural added that he is striving not only for a clear and fair policy for the new integrity initiative with WEG, but also for clarity in rules regarding out-of-competition testing.

“I was hammered by the 150-radius rule I put in last year (requiring horses entered in Meadowlands stakes to be stabled within a 150-mile radius of the track, so they could be subject to out-of-competition testing). We’re reaching out to other states for help in this, and we’re working with the New Jersey Racing Commission to see what they need us to do, for them to takeover if we come up with an out-of-competition test from the Hong Kong lab.

“I want to make our stakes conditions clear. I don’t want any uncertainty. And I think we’ll end up with fair rules.”

— By Kathy Parker
Social Media Commentary & A Letter

Horseman Blair Burgess (on Facebook):
“Trainers (as in most cases they are owners also) take by far the greatest risk and responsibility in this game. The trainer responsibility rule is a total crock and a cop out by the commissions. The buck has to stop somewhere and it always ends up being the trainer…many class 1 and 2’s which they say should never be in system are contamination. These tests should be totally based on quantitative-testing. YES we have lots of bad apples in the game but the advanced testing we have now is not being used where it can be best put to use–finding the illicit products that give a performance advantage. Also 24 retentions and even longer security type quarantines are a much better place to spend money.

Horseman Jay Hochstetler (on TrotCast):
“There has to be some compromise from both sides. Owners have had little to no accountability for so long so this rule is a big shock to them. They have to accept that they can’t be free from punishment while short term trainer switches and beard trainers run rampant. On the track side, they have to be willing to recognize that this rule is extremely broad, perhaps too broad. To compromise, they may have to add some tiers to the punishments. Maybe the non-cheating trainer that has a common owner only gets suspended from races with a purse of $500k and above. They can still hold the offending partners accountable while not giving as severe of a punishment to those not directly involved.”

Horseman Paul Kelley (on Facebook):
“It is absolutely absurd and unfair to hold my clients and myself accountable for something nefarious taking place in someone else’s stable. The offending trainer and his ownership groups should be the only ones held accountable for horses within that stable. You can’t possibly make innocent groups guilty by vague association. This measure could have devastating results for stakes investors as presently written.”

Owner/Lawyer Howard Taylor, in a Letter to the Editor published before Horner and Gural spoke of changes to the proposed policy:
“It seems that the industry is not concerned, but I believe that everyone in harness racing should be up in arms over the recent announcement from the partnership of Jeff Gural and WEG.

“For those who live in a cocoon, these entities have announced that they will bar owners of horses from participating at their tracks if one of their horses tests positive for a class 1 or 2 medication, as well as a TCO2 or steroid positive. In this day and age of advanced testing at microscopic, nonperformance enhancing levels, it is not just likely, but probable that many innocents will suffer.

“Imagine you were a small-time trainer, in the business all your life with marginal success. You finally get the big horse you wanted for all your life. You have him prepped for the Meadowlands Pace or North America Cup. But days before you enter, one of the owners of your horse has a trainer in another state, who you never met, receive a positive for a class 2 substance at 5 picograms (billionth of a gram). Your horse is now barred from the race.

“How about the big owner with horses in many different barns, with many different partners. A trainer gets a positive with a horse you never heard of, but which is owned by someone whom you have only marginal dealings. You may have never met him (think fractional ownership) BARRED!

“You wonder how this is legal as you make your stakes payments faithfully…and the track accepted them. However, the courts have rules that this is legal.

“They own the tracks so they can make the Rules. They can even change them on a whim as we have seen them do, when it affects their interests adversely.

“They not only believe that they can dictate terms, but also how you can race. I used to own a small part of Lady Shadow. She regularly beat most horses, including one name Solar Sister. Solar Sister is owned by Clay Horner, chairman of the board of WEG.

“Two weeks before last year’s Roses Are Red Stake, I received a call from Jaime Martin, the Director of Racing. He told me that he was being pressured to not allow her to participate while she was trained by Ron Adams. He suggested that we switch trainers. I asked if Adams was barred and he acknowledged that Ron regularly raced there.

“He indicated that she would likely be barred if Adams trained her at the time of entry. Against my suggested we gave in and switched barns. Incredibly, Ron Adams was allowed to race another horse in the same race.

“These people are petty and vengeful. They are intent on ruining the sport they claim to be saving. In his announcement, Clay Horner couldn’t help himself but to cite Lady Shadow as an example of conduct he is seeking to correct. Yet, Lady Shadow was found with an excessive level of Clenbuterol, a Class 3 substance, and thus would not have been affected by the Rule.

“Traditionally, horsemen don’t get involved until it affects them or their pockets. This rule is so far reaching that it likely will affect many. Unfortunately, by then it will be too late.

“Horsemen must do something now, before it is too late. We should just refuse to stake horses to races they control. We should avoid the entry box at their tracks. Turn on them before they turn on you. I personally own a lot of horses with many different trainers. Some I have no control over. But, I have asked my trainers to avoid racing at Freehold North (The Meadowlands) when possible.

“I have several top caliber horses which will not be staked to races controlled by these egomaniacs. And, if it does affect me personally, I will simply exit the business. Forewarned is forearmed. Horsemen beware!”
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Yonkers Drivers Adapt To Removal Of Passing Lane

Yonkers Raceway opened up its 2018 race season on Sunday, Jan. 7, with a new look. The passing lane at the half-mile track is now a thing of the past, an initiative of newly-appointed director of racing Cammie Haughton.

Driver Matt Kakaley won the first race on Jan. 7, scoring with the 6-1 Union Man Hanover, who overcame a first-over trip to score by a nose. Kakaley finished the card with four wins, and after adding one win on Monday and another three on Tuesday, he currently leads the Yonkers dash standings with eight victories. None of Kakaley’s eight winners were betting favorites, ranging from odds of 9-5 to 19-1.

“It’s definitely a little different and we’ve had to change our strategy a little bit,” said Kakaley, who along with girlfriend Annie Larabee celebrated the birth of their baby girl, Arianna, on Dec. 27. “There is a lot more action. I think guys are driving more aggressive.”

Kakaley, who has an overall eight wins, four seconds and two thirds in 33 starts in the new year, admits he’s driven a few horses differently with the removal of the passing lane.

“I’ve moved a few horses out of the three hole that I might have rode it out and saw what happened in the lane, but without the passing lane I didn’t take that chance,” he said. “We have to think a little bit more now. We don’t want to take that risk of staying in and not getting a chance to race. It makes our job a little bit tougher.”

George Brennan agrees with Kakaley that there has been a lot more action thus far in 2018 at Yonkers.

“It’s definitely different and definitely generating a lot more movement,” said Brennan, who has four wins in his first 28 starts this year. “Horses are winning from the back because guys are pulling the three hole and racing hard, and some guys are pulling the two hole. It’s not predictable now. You don’t know what is going to happen. It’s definitely stirred the pot a little bit.”

Brennan said his Tuesday night win with I’m The Real Major was an example of how the removal of the passing lane came into play.

“I got to the lead and (Greg Merton) came at me past the quarter pole,” said Brennan. “Normally I might have let him go but it looked like he had no horse so I left him out there. A lot of times before that I would have let the guy go and hope for the passing lane. But there’s no passing lane to hope for now.

“You aren’t going to sit in and let the race come to you. You have to make the race now. You have to create.”

Brennan said a check of Jan. 9 results shows the impact removing the passing lane has had on the racing and wagering.

“There was a $58 winner, a $62 winner, a $43 winner, a $24 winner and a $20 winner, and the handle was $802,000,” said Brennan. “So it’s generating handle. I can’t remember the last time the handle was more than $800,000 on a Tuesday night.”

Jason Bartlett has held a firm grasp on the driving titles at Yonkers Raceway for several years, including setting a track record in 2017 with $10.4 million in purse earnings. However, Bartlett is off to a slow start in 2018, with just one win in 35 drives at Yonkers thus far.

“I told my wife (Kristen) right now I couldn’t win a one-horse race,” Bartlett said with a laugh. “It’s been slow but a few days isn’t the whole year.”

Bartlett believes it will take a few weeks to see what kind of impact the removal of the passing lane will have.

“It’s too early to get a full grasp on it, I’d say in a month we’ll know a little bit more how it’s affecting the racing,” said Bartlett. “All of the drivers are very good and it’s going to be a little bit of a learning curve. The one thing is the vacating of the two hole has become pretty popular so far.

“A horse that sits third at 10-1 usually sits in, but now they’re moving. So that outside flow is going to be third or fourth-over for horses in sixth, seventh and eighth. They’re going to have to hope they go a half in :55 because you can’t do a lot of three-wide moves at Yonkers on the backside.” — By Gordon Waterstone
American Girl Looks For Miami Valley Win

A field of 10 will line up behind the gate in Friday night's $25,000 Open Pace for fillies and mares. Carded as an open handicap, racing secretary Gregg Keidel assigned the outside three posts, with American Girl, Justlikequeen and Safe From Terror receiving slots seven, eight and nine, respectively.

While Safe From Terror and Justlikequeen finished one-two in last weekend's top-class race at Miami Valley, American Girl remained in her stall in the barn of trainer Tyler George. In fact, American Girl has not raced since finishing third to Justlikequeen in the Fillies and Mares Open on Dec. 8 at Hollywood Dayton.

The five-week layoff—primarily because of the race not filling and the holidays—shouldn't be much concern, according to driver Trace Tetrick.

“Tyler (George) does a really good job of getting them sharp so I don’t think it’s any big concern,” said Tetrick about Miami Valley’s leading trainer in wins and earnings in 2017.

“I think she fits there.”

Now nine, American Girl has been a consistent performer her entire 172-start career, which includes 46 wins, 38 seconds and 37 thirds. Owned her entire career by Darla Gaskin and Stanley Robinson of Indiana, American Girl has amassed earnings of $856,410. The daughter of Art’s Major took her mark of 1:50.3 in 2014 at Hoosier Park.

“She’s a classy Indiana mare. A tough campaigner,” said Tetrick. “She drives good and she’ll go either way, but she likes to do most of her work up toward the front.”

Two starts back on Dec. 1 over a snow-covered track at Hollywood Dayton, Tetrick directed American Girl to a 1:54.3 victory. Tetrick sat the two hole until the stretch when the leading Jerseylicious drifted and opened up daylight. On Dec. 8, American Girl started from post nine and was parked the mile with cover. Despite the trip, Tetrick was able to rally his charge to a third-place finish, beaten just 1 ¾ lengths.

“Last time there was lots of speed on the inside but I was able to push off and sit second or third-over most of the way,” he remembered. “She had a little punch late.”

All but three of American Girl’s career starts have come in either Ohio or Indiana. Those three non-Midwest starts came last year at Yonkers where she competed in the Blue Chip Matchmaker Series. Saddled with posts five, six and seven in those trio of starts, American Girl finished fifth, seventh and sixth.

“She had a lot of bad luck at Yonkers. Bad draws,” said Tetrick. “That’s when they had the old starting line and when you draw (outside) it’s a little tough to get into play all the time.”

Gaskin, who purchased American Girl as a yearling for $6,000 from breeder Gardner Farms, admits the $1-million mark is in the back of her mind.

“She’s just a good ole’ girl,” she said with a laugh. “She’s just a special horse who tries every time. I’m sure she’ll tell me when she’s done racing, but so far so good, knock on wood. I had been contemplating breeding her but Tyler said no. He thinks she can get (to $1 million).”

As for Friday night’s race from an outside post at Miami Valley?

“She’ll get pushed off the gate and put into play. She’ll be OK,” concluded Tetrick.—By Gordon Waterstone

Propulsion Sitting Out; Wild Honey Racing Sunday in Paris

Trainer Daniel Redén has announced that Prix d’Amerique contender Propulsion, who was bred by Fredericka “Rikki” Caldwell of Cane Run Farm and Bluestone Farm and is now owned by Bengt Agerup’s Stall Zet, will not race again before the 1 million euro race on Jan. 28 at the Vincennes track in Paris. Propulsion’s last race was on Dec. 31, when he won the Prix de Burgundy at Vincennes.

Redén has said that Propulsion is in perfect condition for the PDA on Jan. 28 and he believes the horse doesn’t need another race. The Swedish trainer will still send out three starters in this Sunday’s Prix de Belgique, which is the last of the qualifying races for the Prix d’Amerique. His entries are the mare Wild Honey, who won the 2015 Hambletonian Oaks, along with the 8-year-old Call Me Keeper (a son of Pine Chip) and the Norwegian-bred Lionel.

The Prix de Belgique field will also include defending Prix d’Amerique champ Bold Eagle.

American Jerry Riordan will send out Treasure Kronos on Sunday and also is expected to have Prix d’Amerique starters in Ringostarr Treb and Twister Bi. Twister Bi, the winner of last fall’s Yonkers International, received an invitation to the Prix d’Amerique based on his 2017 earnings. His last start was on Dec. 24, when he finished fifth in the race won by Readly Express.

“My horse finished well, but maybe I would have liked him to be more aggressive,” Riordan told Swedish trotting publication Trav Ronden. “Alexandre (Abrivard), who drove him, said he did not think he was as explosive as he used to be before, and we watched the horse afterwards. It turned out he was not completely healthy and he has been treated.”

In other European trotting news, Nuncio’s book is already full and closed at 150 mares. Earlier this month owner-trainer Stefan Melander reached an agreement to stand the son of Andover Hall at stud at Margareta Wallenius-Kleberg’s Menhammar Stud near Stockholm. The stallion’s book filled quickly and the response prompted Melander to decide to retire the horse from racing.

“It is fantastic. I did not expect the interest to be so great,” said Melander.

“It was a great solution for him to stay in Sweden. Absolutely best for all parties,” added Melander, who last year had spoken with Nuncio’s breeder, Russell Williams, chairman of Hanover Shoe Farms, about standing the horse at stud at his birthplace. “It’s empty without him here, but now he’s at least just an hour away. That means a lot to both me and Caterina (Melander’s longtime girlfriend and partner).”—By Kathy Parker
Another Chapter For Campbell, Farber

The Campbell-Farber combination has tasted success in the past and hopes to get another taste with Another Chapter.

Jim Campbell trains Another Chapter for Scott Farber’s Runthetable Stables. Campbell’s connection with the Farber family began 31 years ago when he trained millionaire pacer Run The Table for Farber’s father, Sandy, and has continued to include the likes of Farber’s stakes-winning trotter Opening Night.

Another Chapter is ready to make his debut for Campbell and Farber on Friday at the Meadowlands Racetrack. The 4-year-old trotter is in the ninth race, starting from post 6 with driver Brett Miller.

Farber bought Another Chapter for $90,000 during the mixed sale portion of November’s Standardbred Horse Sale. Another Chapter, a stakes-level performer whose wins last year included an elimination of the Dexter Cup and a division of the New York Sires Stakes, is 9-2 on the morning line. Brett Miller will drive.

“My plans are for him to return to being a stakes-level performer,” Farber said. “I’m a very conservative guy. This business will make you a conservative guy. But I got a little taste of it with my father with Run The Table and got another little taste of it with Opening Night. The idea is to try to win some big races.”

Farber and Campbell will take a look at Another Chapter this winter and determine how to stake him this year, with an eye toward events restricted to 4 year olds. The horse is eligible to the Hambletonian Maturity, which meets that condition.

“I basically go off what Jimmy tells me,” Farber said. “The horse is going to tell us what we can do. The horse holds all the answers. If he earns it, I’ll stake him.”

Another Chapter, a half-brother to millionaire Spider Blue Chip, was purchased as a yearling under the name Orthodox Blue Chip for $125,000 and raced most recently for trainer Per Henriksen.

“I liked him as a yearling,” Campbell said. “He was a racy-looking colt. He shows he’s got some speed and he seems like the type of horse that will go around any size track.”

Campbell first met Sandy Farber while stabled at the Meadowlands. The encounter eventually led to Sandy Farber buying Run The Table in 1987.

“He stopped by the barn and said he was looking to buy a horse,” Campbell said. “I asked him how much he wanted to spend and he said he didn’t care, just to find a nice horse. It took me several months before I bought him a horse. I told him about Run The Table and I still had no idea how much he wanted to spend. He said that if I liked him, he’d buy him. The rest is history.

“Sandy was a first-class gentleman. I was 27 or 28 at the time. I really learned a lot from him. He was a man of his word. And (Run The Table) was one of the horses that helped me along with my career.” (Ken Weingartner/USTA)
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Nominate Your Stallion by January 15 to Make Foals Eligible
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BREEDERS CROWN NO. 35
FOR FOALS OF 2019

TOTAL ESTIMATED VALUE — $6,000,000

STALLION NOMINATION FEE: Due and payable January 15, 2018, in the
amount of the advertised stud fee for the 2018 breeding season ($500 U.S. funds
minimum) — plus an additional surcharge as indicated below — provided, however,
that for first-year stallions placed in commercial service (which would not include
test breedings) after January 15, the nomination must be paid within 60 days after
the stallion first breeds a mare. In no event will any first-year stallion nomination
fee be accepted after December 31, 2018. The Hambletonian Society reserves the
right to determine the stallion nomination fee of those stallions whose 2018 service
is advertised as private, treaty, or if the amount of the fee is not advertised. This
payment covers 2018 matings (foals of 2018).

In addition to the 2018 service fee, the amount of the stallion nomination fee must
include a surcharge as follows:
a) For stallions that stand for a fee from US$3,000 to $5,999 (or $3,856 CAD
(Canadian Dollars) to $7,711 CAD), an additional amount equal to 40% of 2018
service fee must be paid;
b) For stallions that stand for a fee from US$6,000 to $9,999 (or $7,712 CAD to
$12,853 CAD), an additional amount equal to 75% of 2018 service fee must be
paid;
c) For stallions that stand for a fee of US$10,000 ($12,854 CAD), or more, an
additional amount equal to 200% of 2018 service fee must be paid.

For stallions that stand for a service fee of less than US$3,000 (or $2,856 CAD),
no additional surcharge is necessary for nomination.

Any payment on a stallion that does not commercially conceive a foal or breed a
mare by any means during the entire 2018 breeding season may be refunded
provided, however, that it shall be the obligation of the stallion nominator to notify
the Society in writing of any request for refund by December 31, 2018.

Moreover, if a nominated stallion does not breed more than twenty (20) mares in
2018 or produce more than fifteen (15) registered foals in 2019, up to 50% of the
stallion nomination fee may be refunded, provided, however, that it shall be the
obligation of the stallion nominator to notify the Society in writing of any request for
adjustment by December 31, 2018 (mares bred) or by December 31, 2019
(registered foals). No stallion nomination fee will be reduced to less than $500.00
U.S. funds.

Any payment on a North American stallion that has been nominated by January 15, 2018, and is subsequently exported prior to February 15, 2018 and that does not commercially breed a mare in North America by any means during
the entire 2018 breeding season may be refunded, provided, however, that it shall be the obligation of the stallion nominator to notify the Society in writing of any request for refund by December 31, 2018. With the exception of supplemental
nominations or declarations as provided in the conditions, foals of 2018 by a stallion
for which the above nomination fee has been refunded will be ineligible to the
Breeders Crown unless an additional amount equal to the amount of the refund is
paid.

Except as provided above, stallion nomination fees shall not be refunded.

Stallion payments may be made in the local currency of the nation in which the
stallion stands, or in equivalent U.S. funds ($500 U.S. funds minimum).

Conditions for nominating yearlings will be published in the U.S.T.A. Stakes
& Futurities Nomination Book. Specific conditions for the races for which these
foals are eligible will be published in the U.S.T.A. Stakes Guide in the year of the
races. The Hambletonian Society reserves the right to add to, amend or delete the
conditions of all or any part of the Breeders Crown program, without liability.

In 2018, 2-year-old, 3-year-old and open Breeders Crown events will be
conducted under the conditions of Breeders Crown 2018. All of these races are
closed with sustaining payments due in 2018, with the exception of supplemental
nominations.

For more information contact: The Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown at (609) 371-2211 or www.hambletonian.com

**BREEDERS CROWN STALLION NO. 35 NOMINATION BLANK**

Name of Stallion: __________________________ Age/Foal of: ___________ 2018 Service Fee: ___________
Sire: ___________________ Dam: ___________________ Sire of Dam: ___________________
Farm: ___________________ State/Province: ___________________

Owner(s): ___________________

Please check [X]: [ ] In-production stallion (by Jan. 15, 2018) [ ] With penalty (additional 50% after Jan. 15, 2018)
[ ] First-season stallion (within 60 days of 1st cover) [ ] First-season with penalty (additional 50% after 60 days)
The Stallion Nomination Fee is the amount of the 2018 Service Fee plus the above surcharge for fees $3,000 US ($3,856 CAD) or over.
2018 Service Fee: ___________ + Surcharge ( %) = Nomination Fee enclosed: ___________

Make Checks Payable to __________________________
and Mail to: __________________________
The Hambletonian Society, Inc.
Cranbury Gates Office Park
109 South Main Street, Suite 18
Cranbury NJ 08512-3174

City, State, Zip: __________________________ Phone: ___________ Fax: ___________ e-mail: __________________________
Updates for Monday’s Tattersalls Sale
The supplement catalog and updated past performances for the Meadowlands January Select Mixed Sale are now available on the Tattersalls website, www.tattersallsredmile.com. They've also been added to the Equineline Sales Catalog app for the iPad. more

Sbrocco hopes good times keep rolling in 2018
Joe Sbrocco enjoyed a successful 2017, most notably with Dan Patch Award winner Downbytheseaside, and the 76-year-old owner hopes to keep the good times rolling this year. more

Cherishing the moments with Marion Marauder
It is only January, but trainer Mike Keeling is looking forward to another season of racing Marion Marauder. A 5-year-old trotter, Marion Marauder is in the midst of an almost three-month vacation in North Carolina, but the two-time Dan Patch Award winner will return to work soon in preparation for his 2018 campaign. And, oh, the places he might go. more

WEG per-race handle up in 2017
Woodbine Entertainment (Woodbine) today announced that wagering on Woodbine’s 2017 live Standardbred meet, contested between Woodbine and Mohawk, saw a marked increase in average per-race handle to $153,505 up 5.5 percent from the 2016 average of $145,448. The 221-date Standardbred season produced an “all-sources” handle of $347,384,040.61, a 1.7 per cent increase from the $341,513,448 total recorded in 2016. Average field size for the Standardbred meets held steady at 8.8 horses per race. more

Michigan 2018 stakes program announced
Officials with the Michigan Harness Horsemen’s Association (MHHA) have announced their 2018 early-closing colt stakes program for Michigan-sired and Michigan-bred horses, to be contested at Northville Downs and at county fair meetings across the state. more

Ohio USHWA chapter names award winners
The Ohio Chapter of the United States Harness Writers Association will hand out its annual awards at the Ohio Harness Horsemen’s Association banquet on Saturday at the Double-Tree by Hilton Hotel Columbus (Worthington). more

Don McKirgan elected to Ohio Hall of Fame
Donald “Don” McKirgan, one of the top trainers in the state of Ohio, has been elected as the newest member of the Ohio Harness Racing Hall of Fame. He was elected by a vote of the Ohio chapter of the U.S. Harness Writers Association. more

Herb LeVan to receive OHHA special award
Herb LeVan of Lewistown, Ohio, will be honored at the 2018 Ohio Harness Horsemen’s Association annual awards banquet on Saturday (Jan. 13) at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Columbus-Worthington with an OHHA Special Award for his compassion and dedication to the harness racing industry. more

Won The West co-owner William Robinson dies
William James Robinson, 84, of Findlay Ohio, one of the co-owners of $3.9 million winner Won The West, along with many other major stakes winners, died Saturday, Dec. 30, 2017, at his Columbus, Ohio home. more

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