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Harness Racing

WEEKEND PREVIEW

Inside
Weekly
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News Digest

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2017

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Bennett Hopes GMO Proud Makes Him Proud

The 3-year-old gelding trotter GMO Proud makes his Meadowlands debut on Friday night, starting from post 9 in Race 2, a \$10,000 conditioned trot. It's a far different scenario than GMO Proud's 2-year-old debut, which came last July 23 at Big Rapids, Mich., where breeder-owner Aaron Bennett directed the gelding to a 2:12 victory over a "good" fair track in a \$488 overnight.

After that maiden-breaking score, Bennett sent GMO Proud to Hoosier Park, where the son of Jailhouse Jesse posted a 2:01.1 victory in a \$10,000 contest with Trace Tetrick driving.

"He's a little bitty thing and I'm not—I weigh about as much as he does—and we got around the track at Big Rapids and trotted good so we took him to Hoosier Park," explained Bennett, whose Bennett Farms Inc. of Michigan owns GMO Proud. "He's not an easy horse to drive. We put Trace on him and he did a phenomenal job with him."

GMO Proud went on to post a pair of seconds and a career-best 2:00 victory on Sept. 6 at Hoosier Park, but after he made a break two weeks later, Bennett decided to call it a year with his trotter who finished his first year of racing with \$13,119 in earnings.

"He was getting a little sore so we quit with him with the intention of bringing him back this winter and try to get some money with Todd and Lynette (Buter) out east," said

"We quit with him with the intention of bringing him back this winter and try to get some money with Todd and Lynette (Buter) out east."

—Aaron Bennett

WHAT'S INSIDE . . .

Missile J flying high for new owners—pg. 2

Breeding Banter—pg. 4

N.Y. addresses glaucine positives—pg. 6

Bennett. "I'm 300 miles from Hoosier Park so we just decided to call it a year and give him six weeks off and start him back."

With former Michigan-based horseman Todd Buter in the sulky, GMO Proud finished second in a Feb. 3 qualifier at the Big M, race-timed in 2:00. Brett Miller has been tabbed to drive GMO Proud on Friday. One equipment change made by Buter is taking off the trotting hobbles GMO Proud wore in all six of his freshman starts.

A member of one of Michigan's longstanding racing families, Bennett's other focus is now overseeing a 1,500-acre farm in Fremont that includes raising 8,000 pigs. He said he farms using genetically modified products, which led to the naming of GMO Proud.

GMO Proud is out of the Wall Street Banker mare Benn's Jane, who was campaigned by Buter. One of Benn's Jane's siblings is her full sister Babe's Five Six, a winner of \$419,981. GMO Proud's second dam, Jane's Pride, was inducted into Michigan's Hall of Fame in 2008.

Bennett originally consigned GMO Proud to the 2015 Hoosier Classic sale, where the trotter was sold for \$5,000. Soon after, the buyer approached Bennett and he took the sale ticket.

"Being the family and the last one, it probably wasn't the best business decision, but sometimes sentimental value has a little number too," explained Bennett. "He appears to be the last one as we haven't been able to get Benn's Jane back in foal the last couple of years." —By Gordon Waterstone



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Missile J Flying High For New Owners

John McGill hopes a missile can help take him to new heights. McGill and Brian Carsey share ownership of Missile J, who they purchased for \$115,000 at the Tattersalls January Select Mixed Sale at the Meadowlands. The 4-year-old male pacer has gone three-for-three for his new owners and trainer Scott DiDomenico, fueling optimism for a limited stakes schedule later this season.

The purchase of Missile J, a stakes winner in 2016, came two months after McGill and Carsey bought Breeders Crown runner-up Manhattan Beach for \$130,000 at the Standardbred Horse Sale Mixed Sale in Harrisburg. For McGill and Carsey, who frequently buy claimers and state-bred horses in their home state of Indiana, the two acquisitions represent a chance to compete on the Grand Circuit.

"We'd like to, we're just going to see how it works," said the 54-year-old McGill, who runs a truck body and equipment business. "We wanted to try this and see how we do; just try to get our feet wet a little bit."

Missile J, trained previously by Linda Toscano, won eight of 19 races last year and earned \$313,902 for owners KJ Stables and Purple Haze Stables. His wins included the Art Rooney Pace and a track-record 1:53.1 triumph in a division of the New York Sires Stakes at Buffalo Raceway.

A son of American Ideal out of the mare Cantor's Daughter, Missile J was originally purchased as a yearling for \$100,000 under the name Newsmaker Bluechip at the 2014 Standardbred Horse Sale. Missile J is a full brother to stakes-winner Brownsville Bomber and his family includes millionaire Cam Swifty and stakes-winner Lonesome Day.

"We're happy with him, that's for sure," McGill said. "I'm going to give all the credit to Scotty D. We weren't looking at him. We were a little bit afraid of him because he hadn't raced since September and he's in the January sale. He had a couple qualifiers, but that was going to be a lot of money for us to take a chance like that. But our trainer just insisted so we went ahead and went with his gut and so far it's worked out. Really, Scotty gets the credit on that one."

DiDomenico said Missile J had "a ton of talent and raw speed that was hard to match."



Missile J

Mike Luzzi Photo



THIS WEEKEND'S FEATURED RACES

Friday, February 17

All times listed are local.

8:50p YR6 **F&M Open Pace**

[Trackmaster PPs](#)

[Click here to download all Friday PPs](#)

Saturday, February 18

8:50p YR6 **Open Trot**

[Trackmaster PPs](#)

9:10p YR7 **Open Pace**

[Trackmaster PPs](#)

9:50p Wdb8 **Preferred Pace**

[Trackmaster PPs](#)

[Click here to download all Saturday PPs](#)



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HarnessRacing Weekend Preview

Kathy Parker

kparker@harnessracing.com

Editor/ General Manager

Lynne Myers

lm Myers@harnessracing.com

Advertising Manager

Gordon Waterstone

gwaterstone@harnessracing.com

Associate Editor

Suzanne Starbuck

sstarbuck@harnessracing.com

Production Manager

Heather Kemper

hkemper@harnessracing.com

Editorial Production

Vanessa Flannery

vflannery@harnessracing.com

Accounting & Circulation

For mail sent via U.S. Postal Service, either P.O. Box 8480, Lexington, KY 40533, or 1910 Harrodsburg Rd., Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40503. (859) 276-4026

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"He's going to dictate to us what he's ready for, but we're pretty optimistic right now," DiDomenico added. "It's great when you have owners who are willing to put up the money to buy horses and give you a chance. Brian and John have been very good about that."

In 2015, McGill and Carsey owned Indiana Sires Stakes champions Matrix Of Luck (2-year-old male pacers) and MartzTime (older male trotters). McGill said Matrix Of Luck's ISS championship victory was the highlight of his career as an owner.

"I love the excitement," McGill said. "To me, it's like when I had kids at home and they would play sports and you would go to the Friday night football and the excitement. I kind of get the same feeling watching the races and enjoy the challenge of trying to pick the next horse that I can claim and move up." (HRC)

OHIO WELCOMES TOP THREE-YEAR-OLD MONEY EARNER FOR 2016



RACING HILL

p,2, 1:51.2, 3, 1:48-'16 (\$1,727,607)

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- \$500,000 Hempt Final at Pocono
- \$500,000 Messenger Final at Yonkers
- \$400,000 Adios Final at The Meadows
- \$200,000 Tattersalls Pace at The Red Mile
- Finished second in the Meadowlands Pace Final (photo for win) and the North America Cup Final

MULTIPLE STAKES WINNER AT TWO

- International Stallion Stakes in p,2, 1:51.2
- Bluegrass Stakes Division
- Breeders Crown Elimination
- Finished his 2YO season with 5 wins and 2 thirds

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Information regarding syndication or individual bookings may be obtained by contacting Hickory Lane Farm, c/o Ashley Stickel, Office Manager, (419) 422-3004, ashley@hickorylanefarm.com; or, Kevin Greenfield, Syndicate Manager, Hickory Lane Farm, (419) 346-0609, kgreenfield@gkflaw.com.

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BREEDING *Banter*

Breeding Season Gets Underway; Cantab Hall Shows Progress For Resuming Breeding

Breeding season swings into high gear this week as stallions begin breeding the maiden and barren mares who are ready and waiting.

The Hanover Shoe Farms' stallion Cantab Hall, who underwent neck surgery last year, has been recovering well and the farm is hopeful he will breed mares this season. He has been

successfully collected thanks to the assistance of a phantom on a hydraulic lift.

"He's been at Select Breeders, which handles our frozen semen for the international market, and he is being trained to use the phantom on the lift," said Hanover president and CEO Jim Simpson. "It appears that many stallions can have trouble backing off the phantom, and the hydraulic feature takes that problem away. So we're in the process of installing a phantom with the hydraulic feature at Hanover, and I'm optimistic about Cantab breeding this season."

In other breeding news from Pennsylvania, 2016 Horse of the Year Always B Miki is settled in at Diamond Creek Farm after a bit of schooling for his new career.

Yes, he's gone through training for breeding. Diamond Creek's Adam Bowden said he adopted a plan for all of the farm's new stallions to be trained to breed by a veterinarian at Hagyard Equine Medical Institute in Lexington, Ky. When Always B Miki was at Diamond Creek's Paris, Ky., farm late last November after concluding his racing career, he spent a couple of days at Hagyard to learn the ropes of his new job.

"All three of our new studs (Always B Miki, Creatine and Southwind Frank) were taught about what to do in the breeding shed, and because of that none of them need a mare in the breeding shed to be collected," said Bowden. "They're all business, and they're in and out of the shed and back in their paddocks pretty quickly."

"It appears that many stallions can have trouble backing off the phantom, and the hydraulic feature takes that problem away!"

—Jim Simpson



The 2013 Three-Year-Old Filly Pacer of the Year I Luv The Nitelife recently delivered her second foal, a colt by Sweet Lou.

The first mare Always B Miki bred was the maiden Fable, a Rock N Roll Heaven sister to Pure Country.

"He is producing a ton of semen. We can breed 15 to 20 mares per collection," said Bowden of Always B Miki's prowess in the breeding shed. "Hopefully, he'll get his mares in foal."

In addition to having three new studs at the farm, Diamond Creek is already welcoming new foals. Earlier this month \$1.9 million winner I Luv The Nitelife delivered her second foal, a colt. He's by Sweet Lou and carries his sire's famous blaze.

"He's a pretty nice colt," said Bowden. "She has a really nice Somebeachsomewhere yearling colt, so I'm not sure who we will breed her to this year just yet. She could go to Somebeach or back to Sweet Lou."

And Diamond Creek has also acquired an interest in another headliner. Early this year the farm bought into the 3-year-old pacing colt Downbytheseaside, runner-up to Huntsville in the Breeders Crown. Downbytheseaside is in training at Spring Garden Ranch with Brian Brown and is now owned by Country Club Acres, Richard Lombardo, Joe Sbrocco and Diamond Creek.

When asked if Diamond Creek has set a goal to stand more stallions than any other farm, Bowden said, "I don't know if we want to be bigger, but we want to have access to all of the best stallions." —By Kathy Parker

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Grand Circuit Events

#4) Kentucky Futurity #126

Foals of 2015 to Race in 2018

#5) Tattersalls Pace 2018

Foals of 2015 to Race in 2018

PAYMENT DUE FOR EVENTS #4 & 5

	OPEN	FILLY
March 15	\$500	\$300
a) Supplemental Payment due March 15	\$1,000	\$500

a) Those horses not nominated to these events by the yearling payment may be made eligible by making the two-year-old supplemental payment of the fees designated above.

#6) International Stallion Stakes #115

Foals of 2015 to Race in 2017

#7) Bluegrass Series #43

Foals of 2015 to Race in 2017

PAYMENT SCHEDULE EVENT #6

March 15	\$300
April 15	\$400
May 15	\$500
b) Supplemental Payment due March 15	\$1,000

PAYMENT SCHEDULE EVENT #7

*March 15	\$350
April 15	\$450
May 15	\$550
b) Supplemental Payment due March 15	\$550

b) Ineligible two year olds may be supplemented to these events in 2017 by making the payment designated above on March 15 plus the April 15 and May 15 payments.

Future Eligibility: *The March 15 payment guarantees eligibility to the Bluegrass Series #43 as a three year old.

The Allerage Farms Series

Early Closing Events For All Divisions Of Older Horses

#8) OPEN PACE - TVG SERIES

\$150,000E Saturday, October 7

#9) OPEN TROT* - TVG SERIES

\$150,000E Saturday, October 7

#10) OPEN MARE PACE - TVG SERIES

\$85,000E Sunday, October 8

#11) OPEN MARE TROT* - TVG SERIES

\$85,000E Sunday, October 8

PAYMENT SCHEDULE EVENTS #8 & 9

March 15	\$1,500
April 15	\$2,000
Declaration Fee	\$2,500

PAYMENT SCHEDULE EVENTS #10 & 11

March 15	\$1,000
April 15	\$1,500
Declaration Fee	\$1,500

*The Red Mile reserves the right to invite one horse to race in each of the trot finals subject to payment of all fees associated with this series.

To Be Raced At Hoosier Park Racetrack & Casino

Three Year Old Filly Early Closers (Open)

#12) NADIA LOBELL-3YO FILLY PACE

\$175,000E Wednesday, September 13

#13) THE MONI MAKER-3YO FILLY TROT

\$175,000E Friday, September 22

PAYMENT SCHEDULE FOR EVENTS #12 & 13

March 15	\$1,500
April 15	\$2,000
Declaration Fee	\$2,500

COMPLETE CONDITIONS FOR ALL RED MILE STAKES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE USTA STAKES GUIDE
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N.Y. Commission Addresses Glaucine Positives

The New York State Gaming Commission Thursday announced significant, nation-leading action in addressing the presence of the alkaloid glaucine in the urine and plasma of race horses, resulting in more than \$100,000 in purses returned and 11 disqualifications, plus additional fines and suspension for a single trainer whose horses had particularly high levels of the substance.

Glaucine is a potent drug with the potential to affect race performance by means of its anti-inflammatory, antitussive, bronchodilatory and hallucinogenic properties. Glaucine has not been approved as a drug for any use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI) does not include glaucine in its Uniform Classification Guidelines for Foreign Substances.

"New York is once again leading the way when it comes to preserving integrity in horse racing," said Commission executive director Robert Williams. "The Commission took deliberative action based upon solid research to hold trainers

accountable for substances found in horses under their care. We call on other jurisdictions around the country to follow suit to send a clear message: we will tolerate nothing short of fair and safe horse racing."

"The New York State Gaming Commission's action on glaucine preserves the integrity of the internationally renowned horse racing we host in New York State," said Peter Arrigenna, a prominent New York harness horse owner and Trustee for the Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund (New York Sire Stakes). "Glaucine has been a hot topic in the harness racing world for the past year, and thanks to New York's prudent action on this substance, the industry has a clear path forward in how to best handle future cases."

Over the past year, the Commission found 55 instances of horses with glaucine in their systems at levels greater than 100 pg/ml. As is standard practice, all impacted horses were immediately put on the Stewards List, which prevents a horse from entering any future races until the horse is tested and found negative for the presence of any illegal substance.

"Thanks to New York's prudent action on this substance, the industry has a clear path forward in how to best handle future cases."

-Peter Arrigenna

Of the 55 instances found by the Commission, 11 were found to have levels higher than 500 pg/ml. For these cases, the Commission ordered that the horses be disqualified from the applicable races and any purses won by the owners of those horses be returned, totaling \$103,530.

Trainer Richard Johnson twice raced the horse "Rubber Duck" at Yonkers Raceway with glaucine levels far greater than 1 ng/ml. In addition to the disqualification and purse return totaling \$61,660, Johnson is facing a 45-day suspension and \$1,500 fine. Trainers who had horses test with a level between 500 pg/ml and 1 ng/ml include Scott Biccum, Ron Burke, Mark Ford, Rob Harmon and Julie Miller.

A complete list of horses that had elevated levels of glaucine may be found [here](#).

The Commission began finding elevated glaucine levels in January 2016, but reserved issuing rulings pending further investigation. Over the past year, the Commission and the New York Drug Testing and Research Laboratory have collaborated with other jurisdictions and national racing organizations to conduct research on glaucine, which may be naturally found in wood shavings used to line horses' stalls.

New research conducted by New York and Pennsylvania officials substantiate that glaucine levels of 500 pg/ml or greater in a horse on race day indicate that the horse was introduced to a potentially efficacious dose of the substance on race day. Therefore, the Commission's Rule 4120.2(n) applies, which states that no drugs or medications—other than those specifically exempted—may be administered by any means within one week of the scheduled post time of the race in which the horse is to compete and that it is the trainer's responsibility to prevent such ingestion within such one-week period.

Most recently, the Racing Medication & Testing Consortium's Glaucine Task Force and Science Advisory Committee recommended applying two thresholds for the presence of glaucine in a race horse. The Commission's actions Thursday—and going forward—are based on these standards and disqualifying a horse that violates such thresholds:

- > 500 pg/ml = Disqualification, loss of purse and Stewards List
- > 1 ng/ml = Disqualification, loss of purse, Stewards List and additional penalties, including fines and suspension

The Commission will continue to place horses that test in excess of 100 pg/ml for glaucine on the Stewards List and require those horses to test below such concentration before being permitted to race again. Horses testing in excess of 500 pg/ml will incur penalties as described above. *(with files from NY Gaming Commission)*



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Goshen Yearling Sale set for Sept. 10

The third annual Goshen Yearling Sale has been scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 10, at the Mark Ford Training Center in Middletown, N.Y. [more](#)

Mach It A Par set to tee off for 2017

When trainer Rich Banca purchased Mach It A Par sight unseen last winter, he thought he was getting a mare who knew how to win and who could be effective in the mid-level conditions at Yonkers. When she showed up to the barn, her appearance didn't instill confidence, but Banca was undeterred. [more](#)

Marcus Miller to represent USA

Marcus Miller is going from Rising Star to Stars and Stripes. The 27-year-old Miller, who in two weeks will receive the 2016 Rising Star Award from the U.S. Harness Writers Association, was named by the U.S. Trotting Association as America's representative for August's World Driving Championship in Canada. [more](#)

Blooded Horse winter sale finishes strong

The 54th Annual Blooded Horse Winter Sale held Feb 13-14 at the Delaware County Fairgrounds in Delaware, Ohio, was the strongest in recent history. The mild winter had horsemen eager to restock stables and breeders clamoring for mares. [more](#)

SC, Forest City combine yearling sales

Standardbred Canada and Forest City Standardbred Sales Inc. are proud to announce that agreement in principle has been reached to combine the two yearling sales into one which is scheduled to take place at the Western Fair District Metroland Media Agriplex in London, Ont., on the weekend of Oct. 14-15, 2017. [more](#)

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RACE LINES

Harness Racing Leaders

Compiled by the USTA—through February 14, 2017 (week difference Feb. 8-14).

Leading North American-Based Money-Winning Horses

	Sts.	W	P	S	Earnings
Somewhere In LA (6pg)	6	4	0	0	\$87,250
Red Hot Herbie (7tg)	4	2	1	0	79,300
Caviart Luca (6pg)	4	3	0	1	61,400
Roland N Rock (5pg)	6	1	2	0	58,300
Rubber Duck (5th)	2	2	0	0	58,000
Springbank Sam N (10tg)	5	1	1	1	54,950
Allerage Star (5tm)	4	1	2	0	49,000
Enhance Your Mind (5pm)	6	4	0	0	44,700
Bushwacker (6pg)	6	3	0	0	43,000
Savage Seelster (7pg)	6	3	2	0	42,625
Guantanamo Bay (5pg)	5	2	0	0	42,100
American Virgin (5pg)	5	2	2	1	41,776
Rock Of Cashel (7th)	5	1	2	0	41,050
Sports Bettor (5pg)	6	1	0	3	40,100
Soto (5ph)	5	3	0	0	40,000

Leading Money-Winning Drivers

	Sts.	W-P-S	UDR	Earnings (wk. diff)
Aaron Merriman	590	142-93-67	.366	\$921,464 (\$151,324)
Jason Bartlett	283	52-40-45	.315	890,546 (136,095)
George Brennan	270	39-37-29	.256	734,985 (128,220)
Scott Zeron	247	42-31-25	.274	721,570 (140,970)
Jordan Stratton	242	36-39-34	.285	698,760 (86,410)
Corey Callahan	421	82-53-45	.300	681,981 (89,337)
Matt Kakaley	244	29-39-28	.246	662,354 (111,230)
Trace Tetrick	326	60-41-37	.292	562,069 (112,020)
Dave Palone	260	75-44-33	.425	558,015 (40,119)
Daniel Dube	234	21-35-32	.218	509,293 (71,165)
Kayne Kauffman	330	59-36-44	.284	497,635 (48,725)
Chris Page	342	47-38-48	.246	484,271 (65,400)
Yannick Gingras	254	51-35-36	.325	476,923 (86,467)
Doug McNair	191	46-30-28	.377	475,211 (67,736)
Ronnie Wrenn Jr.	376	72-71-64	.353	470,146 (90,005)

Leading Money-Winning Trainers

	Sts.	W-P-S	UTR	Earnings (wk. diff)
Ron Burke	306	68-46-46	.356	\$830,813 (\$101,090)
Rene Allard	169	34-30-22	.343	482,687 (102,372)
Richard Banca	118	16-18-19	.274	340,261 (22,375)
Richard Moreau	178	25-23-28	.265	290,907 (57,718)
Andrew Harris	106	20-14-12	.300	286,510 (10,660)
Rob Harmon	86	25-10-6	.379	273,844 (49,000)
Scott Di Domenico	99	15-16-11	.278	247,705 (44,241)
Carmen Auciello	145	20-21-20	.264	243,640 (32,051)
Dylan Davis	99	28-16-13	.416	242,268 (45,029)
Richard Johnson	92	17-22-9	.350	227,844 (29,397)
Mark Ford	112	12-14-16	.224	199,177 (21,050)
Jeff Bamond Jr.	74	9-6-13	.225	189,192 (21,502)
Matias Ruiz	74	13-6-13	.279	188,371 (38,380)
Walter Haynes Jr.	56	19-8-7	.460	180,655 (27,335)
Jim King Jr.	71	13-16-5	.332	174,078 (19,025)

Leading Breeders

Breeder	Starters	Winners	Wins	Earnings
Hanover Shoe Farms Inc.	396	139	205	\$1,764,735
Winbak Farm	379	106	145	1,212,816
Brittany Farms	110	38	49	454,585
Seelster Farms Inc.	94	37	59	432,528
Perretti Farms	107	31	41	423,276
Bulletproof Enterprises	75	28	38	367,156
Robert McIntosh Stables Inc.	54	27	37	309,890
Kentuckiana Farms Gen Par	73	20	31	290,665
White Birch Farm	65	19	27	288,072
Diamond Creek Farm LLC	47	17	23	284,701
Blue Chip Bloodstock Inc.	63	20	37	279,660
Fair Winds Farm Inc.	45	21	29	241,792
CSX Stables	32	17	25	240,622
Robert J. Key	57	23	26	223,054
Frederick W Hertrich III	68	21	27	215,321

Leaders Of The Week

Ranked by wins for Feb. 8-14 from results at major North American pari-mutuel tracks.

Drivers

Drivers	Starts	W-P-S
Aaron Merriman	95	23-15-11
Ronnie Wrenn Jr.	58	16-11-6
Trace Tetrick	62	14-9-3
Tony Hall	44	12-5-3
Josh Sutton	49	11-5-11
Bob McClure	43	10-5-9
Tony Morgan	36	10-3-7
Wally Hennessey	26	10-3-1
Alfred Carroll	38	9-3-7
Jim DeVaux	24	9-3-6
Travis Henry	40	9-6-4
Brett Miller	28	8-3-6
Corey Callahan	66	8-9-6
George Brennan	36	8-3-5
Shawn Gray	32	8-6-4

Trainers

Trainers	Wins
Ron Burke	10
Rene Allard	8
Richard Moreau	7
Dolores Basilone	6
Jennifer Lappe	6
Kimberly Asher	6
Nick Surick	6
Gerry Sarama	5
John MacDonald	5
Clyde Francis	4
Craig Gilmour	4
Dan Ater	4
Dylan Davis	4
Herman Hagerman	4
Jamie Copley	4
Kathleen Plested	4
Maria Rice	4
Rob Harmon	4
Tim Maier	4
Tyler George	4
Virgil Morgan Jr.	4