Fast Closer In First Leg Of Levy Seeks To Capitalize In Round 2

The end result of placing fourth does not do Capital Account’s effort in the first $50,000 leg of the George Morton Levy Series justice. The 4-year-old horse owned by Randy Bendis and Thomas Pollack trailed the leading Polak A by 11 ¼ lengths at the quarter and 10 at the half before storming home to finish fourth, beaten 4 ¼ lengths.

Capital Account’s :54.2 back half over the Yonkers oval had owner Bendis beaming.

“I was extremely happy with the effort. He raced really flat last time, but we scoped him and that was a result of flipping his palate,” said Bendis, Capital Account’s trainer when the horse is based at The Meadows.

Due to the flipped palate after his last start at The Meadows, Bendis was unsure about racing Capital Account in the Levy so quickly.

“We were really 50/50 on racing him this week, but we made the payments so we figured we would give it a shot,” Bendis added. “He returned to the form he had in the start he had before he flipped his palate, luckily.”

Capital Account was an $80,000 purchase by co-owner Pollack at the January Tattersalls Mixed Sale. The son of American Ideal and standout mare Copywriter was one of Pollack and Bendis’ top selections at the sale.

“I have to give credit to Tom for getting this horse. He picked him out and we were hoping to purchase him around the six-figure mark as a good cornerstone for our stable,” Bendis added.

While Bendis raced Capital Account at The Meadows to begin 2015, he always had the Levy series in mind.

“We watched his video when he won at Yonkers and beat some really nice 3 year olds last year,” said Bendis. “He’s not a big strapping colt, but if we go on the half miles, he can compete with the horses in this series.”

Capital Account’s victory at Yonkers that Bendis referenced was a 1:52.4 victory in the New York Sires Stakes on July 17 of last year, defeating top pacing colts like Big Boy Dreams and All Bets Off.

Capital Account raced under the direction of Jimmy Takter last season, compiling earnings of $250,538 in 24 starts. He had multiple notable second-place finishes, in the Matron, Tattersalls Pace, Monument Circle and Gilmour Series Final.

After having post six in the first leg, Bendis was eager to see how Capital Account performs with a post closer to the rail. Capital Account has drawn post position 3 in the last of the Levy leg divisions on Saturday (Race 10).

Driver Brett Miller had plenty of experience with Capital Account as a 3 year old and knows when the horse is at the top of his game. He let Bendis know how thrilled he was with the horse’s effort in the Levy opener.

“Brett was excited with how he raced. He knows him from driving him so much. When the horse is not on a line, he’s a really good horse,” Bendis added.

There are four divisions of the second leg of the Levy on Saturday night at Yonkers, beginning with Race 7. First leg winner Polak A, a recent import from western Australia, will square off against the war horse Foiled Again in Race 8.—By Jay Hochstetler
Woodbine Hi-5 Jackpot
$726,120 On Thursday’s 10th

Woodbine’s Jackpot Hi-5 has another huge pool for bettors looking for a big score. When the Hi-5 wasn’t hit on Monday night (March 23), the carryover pool for Thursday (March 26) soared to $726,120.53. The Jackpot Hi-5 is Race 10, with an estimated post time of 10:25 p.m.

The Jackpot Hi-5 is essentially a bet where the bettor must select the top 5 finishers in a race in the correct order. The takeout for the wager is just 15 percent.

A mandatory payout is set for Saturday, April 4, the second-to-last card of the Woodbine Standardbred meet. In preparation for the event, the final opportunity to wager on the Jackpot Hi-5 before the mandatory payout date will be Monday, March 30. The carryover will continue to build through that date, provided there is not a single winner. The wager will then be suspended for the Thursday, April 2, and Friday, April 3, cards of racing, allowing customers to prepare for the mandatory payout prize.

On a card where there is not a mandatory payout, and not just one winning ticket, half of the wagering pool is carried over and offered on the next racing card. The other half is paid out in consolation payouts to those Jackpot Hi 5 tickets which have the correct order of finish. If there are no winners of the wager, the entire pool, minus takeout, carries over.

Click [here](http://www.harnessracing.com) for the entire Thursday night program at Woodbine so you can take your shot at the Jackpot Hi-5.

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Put On A Show Filly To Be Sold
By Northwood In Lexington

The $2.4 million winner Put On A Show will be part of the show during the fall racing and sale scene in Lexington when her first foal, a filly by Somebeachsomewhere, will be sold at the Lexington Selected Sale at the Fasig-Tipton Pavilion.

Bob Boni’s Northwood Bloodstock Agency will offer the filly, named Beach Showoff, in its consignment. Northwood Bloodstock is returning to Lexington after a one-year absence.

“I’m thrilled to return to Lexington with this filly as a featured attraction,” said Boni. “Arrangements have been made for the yearling filly to be prepped at Diamond Creek Farm in nearby Paris, Ky., so yearling shoppers visiting the farms in the Bluegrass will have the opportunity to see her before the sale.”

Richard Young, Joanne Young and Craig Henderson campaigned Put On A Show and still own the mare as well as Beach Showoff.

“This maternal family is so strong; the great ones are all fillies,” said Young of Put On A Show’s dam, the Artsplace mare Stienam’s Place, a winner of $1.4 million and a granddaughter of $1.3 million winner Stienam. “From a filly pacer standpoint, you can’t beat the breeding.”

Beach Showoff was foaled at Hanover Shoe Farms and has continued to reside there, as does her dam. Young said he plans to ship Beach Showoff to Diamond Creek in June so she will have plenty of time to be ready to show off for yearling buyers. Last fall Young sold his top pacing filly I Luv The Nitelife to Diamond Creek.
After Big 2014 Season, Coffee Addict In Matchmaker

Are you a Coffee Addict? You might say trainer Bruce Saunders has become one and it’s not because of the java he buys at Starbucks.

Saunders trains the 5-year-old pacing mare Coffee Addict, who is competing in the Blue Chip Matchmaker Series at Yonkers Raceway. It’s a step up for the daughter of Dragon Again, but one he thinks the mare earned. Last year she earned $174,555 for owners James Clarke Sr. and Andrew Altobelli, both of Pennsylvania, while racing solely in overnights at Yonkers, the Meadowlands and Harrah’s Philadelphia. She now sports career earnings of $327,963.

“We were being a little optimistic that she could compete in the Matchmaker, but she has a very high turn of speed, and gate speed,” said Saunders. “And the new format where they don’t allow trainer entries in the legs works in our favor as well.”

Coffee Addict was a $37,000 yearling purchase by Clarke and Altobelli and was developed by Zan Kaiser. She earned $131,168 as a 2 and 3 year old and picked up $54,188 in stakes competition. Then she moved to the Saunders barn at Magical Acres in New Jersey.

“I had a good trotter named Gesture’s Chance for Jim Clarke 20-25 years ago. He called me out of the blue and asked me if I wanted to take Coffee and race her at Yonkers,” recalled Saunders.

Saunders said he has no reason to believe Coffee Addict won’t be as good this week as she was last week, when she finished third behind Venus Delight and Charisma Hanover, beaten 1 ¼ lengths thanks to a two-hole trip after starting from post 1.

“She always tries hard,” noted Saunders. “She’s very versatile too. When you have a horse that’s flexible enough to race at different tracks, that helps. The one chink in her armor is she can get a little wound up and waste some energy when she’s racing in a hole.”

Saunders believes Coffee Addict will continue to get better, just as she did last season.

“She got on a run where she drew good and won about $60,000 in five or six starts,” said Saunders. “We stopped at 32 starts because she had raced eight weeks in a row, but she was at her best in those eight starts. But we had to give her a break before we started this campaign.”

There are only two Matchmaker divisions for leg two versus three in the opening round, and Coffee Addict will start from post 2 in Race 7. Among the mares she’ll be facing is round one winner Krispy Apple (post 6) and last year’s Matchmaker runner-up Yagonnakissmeornot (post 4). Also, 2014 Matchmaker champion Somwheroverrainbow makes her 2015 Matchmaker debut after being scratched sick from the opening round. She starts from post 7 in the first division (Race 6) on Friday night.—By Kathy Parker
MOHAWK
LIVE RACING
RETURNS
THURSDAY, APRIL 9
POST TIME 7:25PM
$200,000
IN PURSES NIGHTLY!

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$0.20 Standardbred
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Maven Racing In Sweden Saturday

Maven will be racing at the Solvalla track in Stockholm on Saturday, March 28. The 6-year-old mare by Glidemaster will be competing in an overnight at a distance of 2,140 meters (about 1 5/16ths miles), but has drawn post position 8 in the 12-horse field.

“She’s been in Sweden at my owner Goran Falk’s farm,” said Jimmy Takter, Maven’s trainer. “She did a little light training the other day and she came out super.” Maven failed to win any big purse money while racing at the Vincennes track in Paris this winter, but then finished second at the Cagnes-sur-Mer track on the French Riviera on March 8. Maven rallied from far back at the half to finish second behind favorite Timoko in the Grand Criterium de Vitesse de Cote d’Azur, earning about $52,000.

“It costs a lot of money to send them over,” Takter continued. “We were probably $35,000-40,000 in the hole, but getting that money to come in, whatever she does is gravy. She will have this start and maybe another. I haven’t decided about the Lotteria, which is probably the most money she could race for. But Italy is not the same as the Elitlopp.”

Takter’s brother, Johnny, drove Maven in the Grand Criterium de Vitesse and will be aboard again for the Solvalla race.

Rockeyed Optimist Favored In Hirt, But Caviart Luca Takes A Shot

Caviart Luca is not a horse who wins many races, but he also rarely embarrasses himself. The 4-year-old pacer, who on Saturday competes in the $59,000 final of the Clyde Hirt Series at the Meadowlands, has three victories in 30 lifetime races, but has earned a check in 20 of his most recent 21 starts, a span that dates back to October 2013.

So far this year, Caviart Luca has one win and two second-place finishes. Both runner-up performances came in the preliminary rounds of the Hirt Series, where he was second to Rockeyed Optimist in each round. Caviart Luca and driver Andrew McCarthy will start the Hirt final from post 4 in a six-horse field.

“I’m real happy with him,” said trainer Noel Daley, who shares ownership of Caviart Luca with Buck and Judy Chaffe’s Caviart Farms. “I think he’s a pretty decent horse. He does some goofy things, but he’s a big good-going horse. There’s a lot of speed there. He’s always had a heap of speed.”

Caviart Luca is a son of Somebeachsomewhere out of the mare Caviart Sierra. He is a half-brother to stakes-winner Caviart Sydney.

Last year Caviart Luca finished third behind Always B Miki and Capital Account in a division of the Tattersalls Pace and was fifth in a division of the Bluegrass Stakes. The only time he failed to earn money in his most recent 21 races was when he finished sixth in his elimination for the Breeders Crown for 3-year-old male pacers. The gelding has earned $119,722 during his career.

“I’ve had a lot of offers to buy him, but I’ve always had the feeling he’s a pretty decent horse if he gets it together,” Daley said. “He’s not the smartest horse racing. I wouldn’t put him in front at this stage of the game. He’d race them if they got to him, but if he got left alone he’s just as likely to pull up. You’ve got to watch what you do with him.”

Rockeyed Optimist won last week’s Hirt preliminary by 3-1/2 lengths over Caviart Luca in a national-season’s-best 1:48.3 and he captured the opening round by four lengths in 1:49.3. Rockeyed Optimist will start the final from post one with driver Tim Tetrick at the lines for trainer Steve Elliott.

“That horse is going as good as any around at the moment,” Daley said, adding with a laugh, “We can’t keep coming first over to him every week. That’s not going to beat him. I don’t know if we can get in a position to beat him. It just doesn’t look like a good spot there with a short field.”

Following the Hirt Series, Caviart Luca is eligible to the Bobby Weiss Series at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono and the Graduate Series at the Meadowlands. The Weiss Series concludes with a $30,000 final on April 18. The Graduate Series ends with a $250,000 final on July 3.

“Touch wood, he’s sound. I don’t think he’s a champion, but he’s got the makings of a very decent horse. I’ll try to get him through this year and see what happens.” — By Ken Weingartner/Harness Racing Communications

Red Mile Report

Construction continues at The Red Mile for the expansion and renovation of the facility to accommodate Historical Racing games. These photos were taken on Saturday, March 21.
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<tr>
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<td>Horses that have started for a base claiming price of $5000 or less in one of their last 3 starts up to &amp; inc. 4/4/15 AE: Claiming $5000 (if you go in for tag, you can’t be claimed in remaining legs)</td>
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Conditions available upon request. Information is subject to change. For those with questions, please contact the Hoosier Park racing office at 765-609-4880, 765-609-4872 or email Scott Peine at scott.peine@hoosierpark.com

IS=Indiana Sired
Dadoyan: Jackpot Wagers Are Great, But Balance Is Needed

Alex Dadoyan understands the popularity of jackpot style wagers that have proven instrumental in driving handle at Woodbine and elsewhere. But the wagering guru says a careful, multi-faceted approach is needed to attract betting dollars.

“I think it’s great to have big scores for people to win, because that’s what people gravitate towards in their gambling these days,” said Dadoyan, the executive director of the Standardbred Owners Association of New York and the former director of racing operations at the Meadowlands Racetrack.

“Society has proven that people would rather bet $10 with a miniscule chance to win a lot rather than bet $10 and have a decent chance to get $10. That’s most gamblers. In that sense, I think that’s why (jackpot bets) are popular.”

That said, Dadoyan cautions that relying too heavily on jackpot wagers will dilute the amount of money in circulation. He prefers a balanced approach with wagers that don’t cannibalize each other vying for a cut of a bettors’ bankroll.

“We introduced a low takeout Pick 4 at the Meadowlands a long time ago. It must have been 12 years ago, maybe. The guaranteed pools for that bet were not something being done as often then as it is now,” Dadoyan said. “It worked. That’s the bottom line. We grew that bet in popularity immensely from when it started to, at its peak, where we were doing over $100,000 on the Pick 4s in the winter with no problem.

“It’s not a bet like the jackpot where you need to have two miracles happen and be the only one (with a winning ticket). You just need to have a good day and you can take it down. It’s possible that six people take it down and you have $100,000 carryover and six people win $20,000. That’s perfect. It doesn’t have to all go to one person and it spreads the wealth a little more.”

Woodbine, which had more than $700,000 in its carryover pool for Thursday night’s Jackpot Hi-5, rode that wager to a whopping $5.15 million night last summer when more than $2 million was bet into the Jackpot Hi-5 pool alone on a night the bet had a mandatory payout. Over the last year, the Jackpot Hi-5 has produced several other memorable betting nights for the Woodbine Entertainment Group and other tracks that have employed a variation of it.

The belief is that it’s been particularly useful for attracting novice and intermediate bettors looking for more lottery-like pots than standard wagering can provide. The downside is how difficult the Jackpot Hi-5 can be to win. That’s exactly as it should be for a wager with those kind of payoffs.

“I don’t think there’s a one-size fits all strategy,” Dadoyan said. “It really depends on the track and the pool size and what they have going on.

But I don’t think you want to offer too many different bets.”

Dadoyan said there’s merit behind the United States Trotting Association’s Strategic Wagering Program that guarantees pools, particularly at smaller tracks.

He also likes the idea of incorporating horse racing with an actual lottery bet, like Sweden’s V75.

“In the lottery, they show the numbers pop up on ping pong balls. I always thought, ‘Okay, why couldn’t they show in that one-minute segment six, 10-second stretch runs?’ That’s much more interesting.”

Dadoyan cautions that relying too heavily on jackpot wagers will dilute the amount of money in circulation. He prefers a balanced approach with wagers that don’t cannibalize each other vying for a cut of a bettors’ bankroll.
Last week as I was writing this column I was awaiting news about Southwind Serena, the dam of world champion Mission Brief. Steve Stewart of Hunterton Farm in Paris, Ky., where the mare resides, called me last Wednesday morning to tell me both the mare’s life and the life of the foal she was carrying were in jeopardy.

Thankfully, the mare and foal—a colt by Muscle Hill, thus a full brother to Mission Brief—survived, with the foal delivered by cesarean section. While rare in horses, “c-sections” are a part of the extraordinary skill set of equine reproduction veterinarians in the Bluegrass. Within hours after the foal was born, Southwind Serena and the colt were both standing and bonding.

The new colt, however, was full of energy while “Serena” needed to rest, so the foal was sent home to Hunterton and put on a nurse mare. “He’s a really nice individual,” said Stewart.

But Southwind Serena’s problems weren’t over. On Monday (March 23), which was a beautiful spring day in central Kentucky, Stewart was called by Dr. John Park of Park Equine Hospital and advised that the mare was doing so well that they planned to put her in a round pen on a walker to get her a little sunshine and fresh air. Unfortunately, she suffered a setback.

“Later they called me and told me they had put her outside and she showed signs of duress again,” related Stewart. “At first they thought she was bleeding, but then they realized she had colic and they were going to have to do surgery.”

Southwind Serena’s problems with foaling had begun with a bout of colic the previous week. So once again she was taken into surgery, where Dr. Park found the mare had a flip in her intestine. If there was any bright spot in the situation, it was that “Serena” was seen in distress early enough that the blood supply in the intestine was not cut off from the flip.

“She got uncomfortable really fast, so once again, it was the best case scenario of a bad situation,” said Stewart. “They didn’t have to cut the intestine and re-piece it together, which they do when the blood supply has been cut off.”

As of Thursday morning (March 26), Southwind Serena was resting comfortably at Park Equine Hospital.

“This is just an example of the trials and tribulations of being a breeder,” said Stewart. “If we weren’t 15 minutes from a great equine vet hospital, this mare wouldn’t be here. She would have died.”

Southwind Serena was scheduled to be bred to Trixton, but her health woes have obviously put breeding her for 2015 in doubt. Meanwhile, Trixton, who stands at Deo Volente Farm in New Jersey, has quite a few other blue-bloods in his book, among them DTrain (dam of Donato Hanover), Graceful Touch (dam of Muscle Mass and Muscle Massive) and Possess The Magic (dam of Master Of Law).

One breeding report with an unfortunate outcome was relayed to us about the pacing mare Ultimate Velocity p,3,1:54; 4,1:51.1. She gave birth to a colt by Bettor’s Delight on March 18, but hours later needed surgery and died at the University of Pennsylvania’s New Bolton Center. The daughter of Western Ideal was nine years old. Her first foal, born in 2014, is a colt by Somebeachsomewhere named Captain Velocity. Ultimate Velocity was owned by brothers Kenneth “Dave” Stohler and Merrill Stohler. She was the second filly from their homebred mare Extreme Velocity p,4,1:50.3 ($856,070), the winner of the 1998 Breeders Crown Mare Pace.

Thankfully, foaling is usually routine, as has been the case with the blue-blooded matrons Darlins Delight and Put On A Show. On Tuesday, Darlins Delight p,4,1:49.1 ($2,901,926) foaled a colt by Somebeachsomewhere at White Birch Farm in New Jersey. The colt is the mare’s fourth foal, and third “boy.” White Birch both bred and campaigned Darlins Delight.

On Monday (March 23) at Hanover Shoe Farms in Pennsylvania, $2.4 million winner Put On A Show delivered her second foal, another filly, by Somebeachsomewhere.

In other noteworthy births associated with breeding farms, Diamond Creek Farm’s Adam Bowden and his wife, Lindsay, welcomed their second child into the world on Wednesday, March 18. They named their new daughter Grace. Their first child is daughter Finley. Not surprisingly, many who work on breeding farms carry over the vernacular into human reproduction and thus no surprise that Adam texted me, “I’m a filly sire.” — By Kathy Parker
Crazed’s Stud Fee Now $2,500

The 2015 stud fee for World Champion Crazed has been changed to $2,500 for the 2015 breeding season. The new fee is retroactive for mares that have already been booked this year.

Crazed returned to his roots at New York’s Blue Chip Farms this season after a two year stint at Hanover Shoe Farms in Pennsylvania. “The breeders who make up his syndicate understand the competitive nature of the stallion business,” said syndicate manager David Reid.

“We made the stud fee change to simply help maximize the horse’s book, to give him every opportunity to continue on at siring high-level stakes winners. “We think the new fee offers great value and should attract breeders who’d like to stay in New York and take advantage of the outstanding sire stakes program there,” Reid added.

“To paraphrase Blue Chip’s slogan, you can breed in New York and take on the world.” Crazed's first three crops have earned more than $7-million internationally and include New York Sire Stakes Champions plus open and international stakes winners. In addition to marquee trotters like 2014 Season’s Champion Tirade Hanover 4,1:51.1 ($640,890), Crazy About Pat 3,1:54 ($472,744) and Gural Hanover 3,1:53.3 ($423,763).

Crazed is the sire of current sensation JL Cruze 4,1:52.1-'15 ($129,107), winner of seven of nine 2015 starts including finalist of the Charles Singer Memorial and Super Bowl Series at the Meadowlands.

Those wishing to book or seeking more information should call Jean Brown at Blue Chip Farms at (845) 895-3930 or email jbrown@bluechipfarms.com. (Crazed Syndicate)

Hoosier Park Opens Friday Night

Hoosier Park Racing & Casino, now in its 22nd season of live harness racing, opens its 2015 harness meet on Friday, March 27.

Live racing at Hoosier Park Racing & Casino will follow a Friday, Saturday schedule the opening week, a Thursday, Friday, Saturday schedule the second week and then resume a Tuesday through Saturday schedule throughout the remainder of the meet. With a daily post time of 5:15 p.m. each night, the live racing season will be conducted through November 14, 2015.

2,000 Wins For Frank Milby

Maryland native Frank Milby guided Beammeupscottie to victory in the ninth race on Tuesday night (March 24) at Rosecroft Raceway, giving the defending Rosecroft dash champion win number 2,000 in his career.

Milby left from post five and stretched out Casimir Lawman (Roger Plante), who led through the third quarter in 1:24.3 while under pressure from Lone Raider (Brandon Henley). Milby edged the son of Rustler Hanover into the passing lane to win by a half-length in 1:54.

Gloria Kinnamon owns Beammeupscottie and he is conditioned by Brian Callahan.

Brett Risi, 21, Qualifies For WHHC

When Brett Risi started tagging along with his dad and older brother to the horse races at Vernon Downs at age 12, he never thought it would lead to the opportunity of a lifetime.

After winning a qualifying tournament at Vernon Downs last month, Risi, now 21, will compete against 100 of North America’s best horseplayers for a $50,000 prize pool in the World Harness Handicapping Championship (WHHC) in April at Meadowlands Racing & Entertainment in East Rutherford, NJ.

“I am honored to have a chance to play against the best handicappers in the country,” said Risi, who will be the second youngest person ever to compete in the WHHC Final.

“It makes me feel good about myself and I hope more kids my age will come to be as interested in the game as I am.”

Now in its tenth year, the WHHC is harness racing’s premier handicapping tournament and allows players from across the U.S. and Canada the chance to qualify through both live and online events, in addition to buying a seat for $800. In the WHHC Final, each player begins with a $300 bankroll and contestants are required to wager at least $30 on ten designated contest races. The player who amasses the largest bankroll is declared the winner.

Risi, a Herkimer, NY resident, is a college student and works part-time. He is a self-described regular at Vernon Downs and says he has won a few other smaller tournaments, but none that would provide a first-place prize of $20,000.

Three other horseplayers from Vernon Downs and Tioga Downs also won qualifying tournaments recently at the two Upstate New York racinos and will compete at the WHHC Final: Phil Melancon from Clay, NY; Mark “Duke” Smolinsky of Endicott, NY; and Kim Wahila of Vestal, NY.

For more information on the World Harness Handicapping Championship, click here.

No Elitlopp For Melady’s Monet

Melady’s Monet, who has won five of seven starts this year at the Meadowlands, was under consideration for an invitation to May’s Elitlopp in Sweden, but trainer Kevin McDermott on Monday informed race organizers that the 6-year-old trotter would not be sent overseas.

A homebred son of Revenue S out of the mare Keystone Kinnamon owns Beammeupscottie and he is conditioned by Brian Callahan.

Continues on page 10 >>>>
Harry Pownall Jr., 88, Dies

Horseman Harry Eugene Pownall Jr., 88, of Pinehurst, N.C., died Sunday March 22, at his home.

Mr. Pownall Jr. was born Oct. 09, 1926, in Mineola, N.Y., to the late Harry and Beatrice Pownall. He served in the United States Navy during World War II and later followed in the footsteps of his Hall of Fame father, who trained such notables as Titan Hanover for Arden Homestead Stable. As a trainer and blacksmith, Mr. Pownall Jr. worked at Roosevelt Raceway and Yonkers Raceway.

He is survived by his wife, Patricia Jones Pownall; two sons, Gregory Pownall of Norton Mass. and Jarrett Pownall of Garnersville, N.Y.; two stepsons, Stephen L. Jones (Michelle), Newburg, N.Y. and Jeffrey A. Jones (Sher) of Pine Bush, N.Y.; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to First Health Hospice, 155 Applecross Rd., Pinehurst, N.C., 28374, or The Salvation Army, 220 East Russell St., Fayetteville, N.C., 28301.

PHHA's Battoni Announces Semi-Etirement

Ron Battoni today notified the board of the directors of the Pennsylvania Harness Horsemen's Association (PHHA) that he plans to semi-retire from the position of executive director on December 31, 2015. However, he will not be leaving the organization entirely, and will continue in a reduced capacity for a period of three to five years.

Battoni joined the PHHA in 1987. Since then, he has helped lead it through a number of important positive changes in including full-card simulcasting of out-of-state racetracks in the 1990s; the passage of the Race Horse Development and Gaming Act in 2004 which brought slot machines to Pennsylvania tracks; and the opening of Harrah's Philadelphia Casino & Racetrack in 2007.

"While we're disappointed that Ron has decided to reduce his role with the PHHA, we're grateful for the work he has done during nearly three decades as our executive director," said Sam Beegle, president of the PHHA. "We're also very pleased he has decided to continue with the organization for a number of years to ensure a smooth transition. We look forward to his continued contributions to our sport."

Battoni said, "While this was a difficult decision, I feel now is the right time to begin the process of gradually stepping away from my responsibilities as executive director. I'm proud of the work I've done on behalf of the standardbred industry and honored to have served the PHHA and its members. The organization has only grown stronger over the years, and I'm confident it will continue as positive force for a long time to come." (PHHA)
RMTC Recommends Cobalt Threshold

The board of directors of the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium (RMTC) announced Thursday (March 26) that a uniform threshold for cobalt regulation in the United States was approved at its regularly scheduled meeting held on March 24 at Gulfstream Park racetrack in Hallandale, Fla.

The cobalt threshold, which was developed and unanimously recommended by the RMTC’s Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), will be submitted to the Association of Racing Commissioners International (RCI) for consideration as a model rule at RCI’s April meeting in Tampa Bay, Florida. Technical assistance will be provided by the RMTC to individual jurisdictions seeking to adopt cobalt regulations. The SAC is a standing committee of the RMTC, comprised of leading chemists, pharmacologists, lab directors, regulatory veterinarians and racetrack veterinarians from across the U.S. horse racing industry.

Under the RMTC recommendation:
- Horses that test above 25 parts per billion (ppb) of cobalt in plasma shall be: (i) subject to a fine or a warning for the first offense; (ii) placed on the veterinarian’s list; and (iii) ineligible to race until they test below 25 ppb of cobalt in plasma (at the owner’s cost); and
- Horses that test above 50 ppb of cobalt in plasma shall be subject to a class B penalty which in most jurisdictions includes: (i) disqualification of the horse; (ii) a fine; and (iii) trainer suspension.

“This proposal is designed to protect the health and welfare of the race horse,” explained Dr. Rick Arthur, RMTC Secretary and California’s equine medical director. “The recommended thresholds provide generous allowances for vitamin and mineral supplementation but make the administration of cobalt salts impractical. Importantly, the 25 ppb total cobalt threshold in blood is comparable to the 100-200 ppb thresholds in urine being administered internationally.”

In other action, the RMTC board approved Interim Accreditation for the Pennsylvania Equine Toxicology and Research Laboratory (PETRL), after receiving a report from the Horseracing Testing Laboratories Committee – a committee which oversees the RMTC laboratory accreditation process. PETRL is the sixth laboratory accredited by the RMTC since the program began in 2011. With this action, Pennsylvania becomes the 24th horse racing state to utilize an RMTC-accredited lab and an external quality assurance program for its equine drug and medication testing services.

The RMTC board received updates on the nationwide adoption of a Controlled Therapeutic Substances Schedule, third-party administration of furosemide, and a Multiple Medication Violation penalty system. In the past 15 months, the industry has seen major gains in the number of jurisdictions that are presently operating or soon-to-be operating under one or more of the reforms.

The RMTC board also addressed the use of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) – an endogenous substance that has also been inappropriately administered on race-day as a performance enhancer under the name Carolina Gold. Representatives from the SAC updated the RMTC board on the status of research into the proper regulation of GABA, including an RMTC-funded administration study and industry-sponsored analysis of more than 400 post-race samples. Based upon the final results of the SAC’s study and analysis, the RMTC board expects to finalize a recommendation concerning a normally occurring threshold for GABA in the next two weeks. The RMTC will then submit the recommended threshold for GABA to the RCI for consideration at its April meeting. (RMTC)

Meadows Improvements Top $10 Mil

The Meadows Racetrack & Casino announced March 26 that it has invested an additional $4 million to the backstretch operations of the facility’s racetrack. Investments in the improvements to the barns, infrastructure and environment have exceeded $10 million to date.

The Meadows replaced many of the older barns which house the 825 horse population. Other improvements include new stalls, gates, matting, ventilation systems, windows, paving around the barns. The environment also came out a winner with The Meadows’ improvements to alleviate storm water and wastewater run-off. The Meadows is also in the process of installing a state-of-the-art security system to enhance safety throughout the entire racing complex.

“These investments confirm our commitment to providing high quality harness racing for years to come,” said Kevin Decker, director of racetrack operations for The Meadows.

In June 2012, The Meadows celebrated the completion of six new barns and a 10-race paddock, including paved aisles and HVAC, among other improvements. While there are currently fewer barns, each one includes more stalls and the latest technology in airflow management. The initial $6.25 million investment began the replacement process for the original barns built when the track opened in 1963.

The improvements were privately funded by The Meadows’ parent company Cannery Casino Resorts, fulfilling a requirement of Pennsylvania Act 71 (Pennsylvania Slots Bill). The Act, signed into law in 2004, directed the slots licensee to spend a total of $6.25 million of private equity on backside improvements over a 10-year period. The Meadows has worked collaboratively with the Meadows Standardbred Owners Association (MSOA) and the Meadows Horsemen’s Group.

The Meadows backside consist of 70 acres with 22 barns, three blacksmith shops, two tack shops, offices for the Pennsylvania Harness Commission and the MSOA, a 10-race paddock and a track chapel. (The Meadows)
## Harness Racing Leaders

Compiled by the USTA—through March 24, 2015 (week difference March 18-24).

### Leading North American-Based Money-Winning Horses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sts.</th>
<th>W-P-S</th>
<th>UTR</th>
<th>Earnings (wk. diff)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Afraid (6tg)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>JL Cruze (4tg)</td>
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<td>Carolideal (6pm)</td>
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<td>Take It Back Terry (6pg)</td>
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<td>Warravee Needy (6ph)</td>
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<td>Rockeyed Optimist (4pg)</td>
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<td>Michael's Power (6pg)</td>
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<td>Nickle Bag (5pg)</td>
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<td>Melady's Monet (6tg)</td>
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<td>Opulent Yankee (4tg)</td>
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<td>Machs Beachy (6pg)</td>
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<td>Bourbon Bay (4tg)</td>
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### Leading Money-Winning Drivers

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<tr>
<td>Jason Bartlett</td>
<td>531</td>
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<td>Brian Sears</td>
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<td>Ron Pierce</td>
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<td>Eric Carlson</td>
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<td>Matt Kakaley</td>
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<td>Ronnie Wrenn Jr.</td>
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<td>Tim Tetrick</td>
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<td>66-34-44</td>
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<td>Mike Wilder</td>
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<td>Mark MacDonald</td>
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### Leading Money-Winning Trainers

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<td>Virgil Morgan Jr.</td>
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<td>Richard Moreau</td>
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<td>Jeffrey Bamond Jr.</td>
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<td>26-24-33</td>
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<td>Mark Ford</td>
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<td>Gilbert Garcia-Herrera</td>
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<td>Jose Godinez</td>
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<td>Dylan Davis</td>
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<td>Rene Allard</td>
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<td>Julie Miller</td>
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<td>Scott Di Domenico</td>
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<td>Rob Harmon</td>
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<td>Wayne Givens</td>
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<td>Chris Marino</td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
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<td>Bobby Weiss &amp; J &amp; A M Pace (PcD)</td>
<td>Sagamore Pace final (YR)</td>
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<td>Easter</td>
<td>DSIB 3CT final (DD)</td>
<td>Cardinal Trot (Horseman)</td>
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<td>SOA Bonus Trot (YR)</td>
<td>Visible Gold 3CP (Mea)</td>
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<td>Weiss F&amp;M Pace (PcD)</td>
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<td>SOA Bonus Trot final (YR)</td>
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