Gingras Shares Thoughts About Sun Stakes Contenders

Manchego will put her unblemished 15-for-15 career record on the line in the $500,000 Earl Beal Jr. Memorial for 3-year-old trotters at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono on Saturday, one of four major stakes finals being contested on the Sun Stakes program.

The 15-race card also features the $500,000 Max Hempt Memorial for 3-year-old male pacers, the $500,000 Ben Franklin for older pacers, and the $300,000 James Lynch Memorial for 3-year-old filly pacers. First-race post time is 7:00 p.m.

It wasn’t easy for Manchego to remain perfect in her Beal elimination last Saturday night as she needed all she had to hold off the inside-closing Crystal Fashion by a nose in 1:52.4. Manchego drew post 6 in the open draw for the rich final, sandwiched nicely between fellow elim winners Mission Accepted (post 3) and Six Pack (post 9).

“Even though she held on by a slim margin, if we kept going he wasn’t going by her.”
— Yannick Gingras

“I was very happy with the way she raced,” said Gingras about Manchego’s first career go-round against her male peers. “Yes, she did just hold on but it was the first time in a long time I used her. She was out until the three-eighths in a quarter in :26. Even though she held on by a slim margin, if we kept going he wasn’t going by her.”

Gingras drives Manchego, the 2017 Two-Year-Old Filly Trotter of the Year, for trainer Jimmy Takter. The same duo sent out Ariana G in last year’s Beal, with that filly capturing her elimination and then finishing third in the final after a tough trip. Gingras noted that with Manchego’s prior starts this year coming on May 21 and June 12, this will be the daughter of Muscle Hill’s first time racing consecutive weeks this year.

“I think she is coming into this race great,” said Gingras. “I think she needed (last week’s start) as it’s going to tighten her up even more for this week.”

Gingras will also drive Youaremycandygirl, the 2017 Two-Year-Old Filly Pacer of the Year, in the Lynch Memorial final. The Ron Burke-trained daughter of American Ideal has alternated sixths and firsts in four starts this year, and comes into the final off a 1:51.3 victory in her Lynch elim. Leaving from post 2, Gingras was sandwiched between 90-1 Carlo’s Superstar and 1-2 favorite Alexa’s Power out of the gate but he urged his charge to the front just past the opening quarter. Youaremycandygirl led the rest of the distance to score by a neck.

“You’re one that can flip the switch and be a little bit grabby, but other times she’s really good,” said Gingras. “When I raced her at Tioga (a June 3 New York Sires Stakes win) she was really relaxed, but in Canada (June 9 when
Callahan Has Inside, Outside Starts In Three Big Finals

Post position means a lot on a five-eighths mile track when fields are loaded with talent, and no one will know that better than Corey Callahan on Saturday night at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono.

Callahan will start from post 3 with Serene Stride in the $300,000 James M. Lynch Memorial Pace (Race 9), and post 8 with Wes Delight in the $500,000 Max C. Hempt Memorial Pace (Race 10) and with Evaluate in the $500,000 Earl Beal Jr. Memorial Trot (Race 12). All three races are for 3 year olds.

Serene Stride has six wins in eight starts this season (four in overnights), but is facing tough competition in the Lynch: the fast Sidewalk Dancer (1:50.3f) starts from post 1; last year’s divisional champion Youaremycandygirl drew post 2; and Kissin In The Sand, the runner-up in the Fan Hanover final, drew post 9.

In her elimination for the Lynch, Serene Stride started from post 7 and after traffic problems and interference, she held on to finish fifth and earn a berth in the final.

“I was kind of run all over the racetrack,” said Callahan of his journey with Serene Stride in the Lynch elimination.

“She has enough gate speed to protect her position at the start this week,” Callahan said of his 12-1 shot in the Lynch. “The race could depend on Scotty (Zeron, starting from post 9 with Kissin In The Sand), and it looks like Yannick could be racing from his favorite spot (with Youaremycandygirl).”

Callahan will be five places to the right on the wings of the starting car with Wes Delight, who drew post 8 in the Hempt final and is 15-1 on the morning line. Division sensation Lather Up, undefeated in seven straight races this season, including the North America Cup, will start to his inside from post 7.

“I texted Mark (Harder) when I saw post 8 and he said, ‘I guess we were due,’ but it puts us in a bad spot,” said Callahan of the draw. “Our best bet is probably going to be to take off and go inside, or hope they get crazy up front early. Thankfully, this isn’t his last big race.” —By Kathy Parker
SATURDAY, JULY 14

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POST TIME 6:35 PM

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Horses And Fireworks

With the Fourth of July coming up, racetracks are among the sites for fireworks to celebrate Independence Day. While fireworks displays are immensely successful in bringing people to the racetrack, when a track has a backstretch the fireworks cause great consternation among horsemen because the explosions almost always upset horses. There have even been cases when fireworks are believed to have caused a horse to take a bad step and suffer career-ending or life-threatening injury.

“I know for a fact the case of a very good trotter in Ohio and there were fireworks at the fairgrounds where he was stabled and he injured his ankle in his stall and it ended his career,” said racetrack veterinarian Dr. Andy Roberts. “I also had an old retired horse by Direct Scooter and the morning after fireworks he was paralyzed in his hind legs, and I strongly suspect he did something to his back while the fireworks were going off.”

Some horsemen have found that adding background noise from fans and radios can diffuse/muffle the booms of fireworks. Dr. Roberts said the obvious means of minimizing the stress of fireworks is to cover up your horses with ear plugs and hoods.

“I know, for a guy with 20 head of horses, hoods for all? But if you want to be safe, this is a big help along with ear plugs,” said Dr. Roberts. “If it is not particularly loud, you could close doors. Also, it’s best to have someone in the barn. That way if a horse is really having a problem with the noise, you’re going to know about it. And if you have a horse that’s not in to go and isn’t going to be racing soon, you can talk to your vet about administering a slow-acting drug for sedation.”

Sound levels for fireworks are around 150 decibels, thus the concern for horses stabled on the backstretch. In comparison, a jet airplane on takeoff generates about 150 decibels of sound. Sporting events can also be loud, with the all-time high the 142.2 decibel level recorded at a 2014 Kansas City Chiefs football game at Arrowhead Stadium.

American Fireworks in Hudson, Ohio, has been in business for nearly 100 years and currently produces Fourth of July displays at about six racetracks, including Hoosier Park. American Fireworks was also the company that produced the display at Hazel Park Raceway, which had its first Fourth of July show back in 1983.

American Fireworks strongly takes into consideration the safety of horses when shooting off fireworks at a racetrack, according to owner/sales manager Roberto Sorgi.

“There is no such thing as a fireworks that doesn’t make noise. It’s eliminating the titanium salutes out of the shells, eliminating the crackles and whistles,” explained Sorgi.

“At tracks we are shooting at, we try and utilize products that are not as loud. There are some shells that break harder than others, and there are shells that have whistle effects to them. What we do is eliminate anything that is louder than it needs to be.”

Sorgi said a specific protocol is put into place to help alleviate any stress that might be put on the horses.

“'We try and go to the opposite end of the grounds and shoot from that side,'” said Sorgi. “We also try and get the stables to keep the lights on so that way the horses are not seeing the flickering from the outside. We also try and have some sort of music during the day and to keep turning it up throughout until it's something the horses get used to. This way, the noise would be drowned out a little bit so it wouldn’t shock them as much.

“If you don’t do all that, then all of a sudden after it’s quiet, quiet, quiet, and then there is 20 minutes of pounding it might make them jump a little bit. This all seems to work pretty well.” —By Kathy Parker & Gordon Waterstone
Sun Stakes Takes

MANCHEGO (Beal Memorial, post 6)

“She’s been racing with her training shoes. She’s been going with a (heavier) shoe up front and she doesn’t need any weight. We can lighten her up quite a bit. This is something I always do. I don’t do it right away; I’ve been waiting to get to this point in the season. I’ve got another gear there.” — trainer Jimmy Takter

EVALUATE (Beal Memorial, post 8)

“He’ll get better and better with every start. He’s a very good horse. He’s not so far behind Fourth Dimension. I actually think he’s one that can win (the Beal). If we can get a good trip, he can do a lot by himself. He’s a strong horse and a fast horse (1:51.4f mark at Pocono this year).” — trainer Marcus Melander

HITMAN HILL (Hempt Memorial, post 2)

“I thought he raced really well last week. That was really the first mile where I got to stretch him out. I’ve had bad posts lately where I was forced to duck him and race him off cover. But right now, I think maybe they’ve disguised Lather Up and it’s really Wiggle It Jiggleit (laughing).” — driver Brett Miller

STAY HUNGRY (Hempt Memorial, post 5)

“There is going to be a lot of front-end speed and this colt seems to like to come from the back end.” — owner Brad Grant

SHNITZLEDSOMETHIN (Hempt Memorial, post 6)

“He drew inside of Lather Up so that’s definitely a good spot, and we’ll go from there. Lather Up keeps on getting better and better. He is definitely the standout at this moment and I think everybody in this class is going to have to step it up to even contend with him.” — driver Yannick Gingras

FILIBUSTER HANOVER (Franklin final, post 8)

“Post 8 is definitely not the ideal spot. I thought he had a great trip last week but I thought he should have been a little bit better. He did scope a little sick after and I expect Ronnie (Burke) to have him better this week.” — driver Yannick Gingras

SIDEWALK DANCER (Lynch Memorial, post 1)

“The eight hole in the elimination had me a little worried because at Pocono you definitely can’t get away too far back. She raced great in the elimination and having the rail in the final is a huge advantage. As well as Sidewalk Dancer raced last week, she is way better following or out of a hole. And she’s very good first-up. She doesn’t race as good on the front so for her to race as good as she did last week, I thought it was huge. That really wasn’t her trip.” — driver Brett Miller

FOILED AGAIN (Race 3, post 2)

“He’s had a couple of seconds in a row so hopefully he can get off the schneid and get the win. It’d be a great night to do it, no doubt. I’ve obviously wanted him to do it as soon as possible, but I also would like to be able to sit behind him when he does it. I’ve had so many great memories with him. He’s a special horse and it’d be great to get that done.” — driver Yannick Gingras
Marion Marauder Favored In Cleveland Trotting Classic

Marion Marauder, the 2016 Trotting Triple Crown winner, will start from post 2 as the 2-1 morning-line favorite in Saturday night’s $175,000 Cleveland Trotting Classic at Northfield Park. Marion Marauder is the first Hambletonian winner to race at Northfield Park since Mack Lobell won a $30,000 Invitational on April 25, 1988, in a then-track-record 1:58.4 with John Campbell driving.

This is the second renewal of the Cleveland Trotting Classic, with last year’s inaugural event won by Crazy Wow, who will try and defend his title from post 6. Crazy Wow equaled the all-age Northfield Park trotting record of 1:52.3 with his effort.

Jordan Stratton will drive Marion Marauder, who comes into the race off a 1:55.1 victory last Saturday night in the $44,000 Open at Yonkers Raceway. The winner of more than $2.6 million is owned by Marion Jean Wellwood and Devin Keeling, and trained by the husband-and-wife team of Paula Wellwood and Mike Keeling.

Also in the field is Homicide Hunter, whose current three-race win streak includes a world-record 1:50.3 victory in the $200,000 Charlie Hill Memorial on June 9 at Scioto Downs. Homicide Hunter was a scheduled starter in last year’s Cleveland Trotting Classic but was scratched “sick” by trainer Chris Oakes. Aaron Merriman, the leading dash-winning driver in North America this year, will drive from post 7.

Multiple stakes winners In Secret and Will Take Charge will also start in this year’s race. In Secret starts from post 1 with Northfield Park’s leading dash-winning driver Ronnie Wrenn Jr., while Will Take Charge will line up in post 8 with driver Jim Morrill Jr. Ironically, Will Take Charge also drew the outside post 8 in last year’s race, but with the scratch of Homicide Hunter moved in one slot but still finished seventh.

The 16-race card gets underway at 6 p.m. (EDT), with the Cleveland Classic slated as Race 11 (approximate post 9:55 p.m.). The race is the anchor leg of a $7,500 guaranteed Pick 4 pool.—By Gordon Waterstone
Star Trotters Missing From Beal Final

While Saturday’s $500,000 Earl Beal Jr. Memorial at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono has attracted a stellar field of 3-year-old trotters, two names are conspicuous by their absence after failing to advance out of their elimination last weekend: Alarm Detector and Fourth Dimension.

The pair were in the same elimination, which was won by the filly Manchego in 1:52.4. Alarm Detector, the 2017 Two-Year-Old Colt Trotter of the Year in Canada, made a break just past the half and finished seventh, while Fourth Dimension, the 2017 Two-Year-Old Colt Trotter in the U.S., finished eighth after also making a break in the final turn while sitting in the two hole.

Both reigning divisional champs were also not entered in Saturday’s $75,000 Beal consolation. With the Stanley Dancer Memorial on the horizon on July 14 and the Hambletonian three weeks later on Aug. 4, what’s the status of the sophomore trotters? “He got to running in on the turn for no reason and I don’t know why he did that,” Alarm Detector’s trainer, Ben Baillargeon, explained to Weekend Preview. “He was good going into the turn and right in the middle he started bearing in and Trevor (Henry) had to check him and it got him unbalanced."

Baillargeon noted the Beal elim was the first time Alarm Detector had ever raced on a five-eighths track; all nine of his previous career starts had come on the seven-eighths mile oval at Woodbine Mohawk Park. He said he never considered entering Alarm Detector in the Beal consolation after the elim disappointment.

“I wasn’t going to go back for the consolation without knowing what is going on,” said Baillargeon. “I wasn’t going to go back in with my eyes blind.”

Baillargeon said Alarm Detector wears a big head pole on the outside and a smaller one inside, and he is contemplating making that one bigger. He admits it hasn’t been the best start to Alarm Detector’s sophomore campaign.

“He looked so good qualifying and so good his first start (Goodtimes elim win), and then he had no pop in the Goodtimes final (third) and he came up a little sick,” said Baillargeon. “He warmed up so good for the Beal and he came out of the race good. I see him every day so I know that. “So now it’s back to square one and it’s a miserable start to the year. Hopefully the real Alarm Detector will show up one of these days.”

Baillargeon said he remains optimistic the son of Chapter Seven will get his act together in time for the Hambletonian. He hopes Alarm Detector will fit an overnight on July 3 at Mohawk, and if not he plans on qualifying the trotter on July 6. The prize is still the Aug. 4 Hambo.

“Hopefully, that day we will have him perfect.” —Ben Baillargeon

Hall Of Fame Induction Ceremonies Sunday

The 2018 Hall of Fame inductions will take place on the lawn of the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame in Goshen, N.Y., on Sunday, July 1. The festivities will begin with cocktails in the William R. Haughton Memorial Hall at 5:30 p.m., with dinner following at 6:30 p.m.

This year’s Living Hall of Fame inductees include Jules Siegel, the owner of Fashion Farms, and native Swede Margareta Wallenius-Kleberg, the first woman to be elected into the Hall. Longtime announcer Carl Becker and nine-time John Hervey award winner Dave Briggs will be inducted into theCommunicators Hall.

The late Hakan Wallner, inducted into the Swedish Trotting Hall of Fame in 2015, will be inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Immortals. The Living Horse Hall of Fame inductees include Cantab Hall, Western Ideal, Gala Dream and Sweet Future. Amateur driving champion Hannah Miller will also be recognized.

The Historic Track oval will see plenty of racing action over the weekend, beginning with Friday’s Landmark Series for 2 and 3-year-olds. New York Sires Stakes Excelsior Series divisions for 3-year-old pacers are set for Saturday, with Sunday afternoon’s card highlighted by the New York Sires Stakes Excelsior Series for 3-year-old trotters and the $10,000 Mr. and Mrs. Elbridge T. Gerry Memorial Trot featuring Hall of Famers.

Scheduled to drive in the Gerry Trot are Wally Hennessey, David Miller, Dave Palone, Brian Sears, Richard Stillings, Jimmy Takter and Ron Waples.

Racing will conclude on Monday, July 2. Post time for all matinee cards is 1 p.m.

PostTime with Mike and Mike, presented by BetAmerica in conjunction with the United States Trotting Association, will broadcast a special edition of the show on Sunday night from the Hall of Fame dinner. The broadcast can be heard live from 7-10 p.m. via the PostTime website, www.posttimewithmikeandmike.com.
Midnight Express Among Landmark Hopefuls

Olle Leven is no stranger to success in the U.S. and the Monaco resident hopes to add to his accomplishments with his Swedish-born homebred trotter Midnight Express.

Midnight Express, a son of 2014 Prix d’Amerique winner Maharajah out of Leven’s mare Truly Devoted, is among the horses competing Friday at Historic Track in Goshen, N.Y., on Landmark Stakes Day, which kicks off the four-day Grand Circuit meet at the half-mile oval. Midnight Express is only the second Maharajah-sired horse to race in the U.S., following Swedish-born filly Unau in 2015.


“That was many years ago,” Leven said with a laugh about those successes. “But never mind that. I have had it.”

Leven also raced Credit Winner, who was the runner-up in the 2000 Hambletonian and is one of the sport’s top trotting sires, producing the earners of more than $87 million. He remains a member of the Credit Winner Syndicate. Midnight Express was foaled in Sweden, but raised at New York’s Blue Chip Farm, where Credit Winner stands, before being sent to trainer Ake Svanstedt. Leven had purchased Midnight Express’ dam, Brittany Farms-bred Truly Devoted, for $100,000 at the 2008 Lexington Selected Sale and, after two starts in the U.S., brought her to Sweden where she earned the equivalent of approximately $200,000 on the racetrack.

Truly Devoted’s family includes stakes-winning females Cherished Victory, Keystone Profile and Act Of Grace, the granddam of 2010 Hambletonian winner Muscle Massive. Miss Marita, the dam of Dan Patch Award-winner Passionate Glide, also is a member of the family.

“I looked at Truly Devoted, I liked Truly Devoted, and we bought her,” Leven said. “She was a good mare for me.”

Midnight Express has won three of 13 career races and earned $26,081. He heads to the $13,600 Landmark Stakes for 3-year-old trotters with two wins and two seconds in his past four starts, all at Yonkers. The colt is staked to the Yonkers Trot, Matron, Carl Erskine Trot, Bluegrass, and Reynolds Memorial.

“When Ake moved to the U.S., I said to myself, give my Swedish horse a chance,” Leven said. “I like Midnight Express and I like to race in the United States and I wanted to use Ake because he was the absolutely best trainer in Sweden when he decided to move to the U.S., no doubt about that.

“I’m pleased so far. We have raced at Yonkers this year four times; two wins, two seconds. I’m very pleased.”

Leven, who owns two racehorses at the moment, watches Midnight Express’ races on the Internet.

“I can’t say exactly what I like most about him,” Leven said. “He’s not a horse with quick speed, but he is very, very strong.”

It seems fitting that a son of Maharajah is racing at Historic Track during the Grand Circuit meet, which coincides with Sunday’s Hall of Fame inductions at the adjacent Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame. Among the inductees is Margareta Wallenius-Kleberg, the owner of Menhammar Stuteri, which bred, raced and stands Maharajah.

Racing begins at 1 p.m. at Historic Track. (Ken Weingartner)
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More revelations about PA procedures

Last week the Paulick Report, a Thoroughbred-oriented website, reported in a story written by former Indiana Horse Racing Commission executive director Joe Gorajec that a positive test for a Class 1 drug, found in a horse that earned money in the $252,000 Pennsylvania Sires Stakes championship for 2-year-old colt trotters on Sept. 11, 2016, resulted in no action taken. Other previous positives for the Class 1 drug oxycodone had been determined to be a result of contamination but purses were redistributed.

On Wednesday, June 27, the Paulick Report published a supposed timeline of discovery of the alleged cover up of the positive from Pennsylvania attorney Alan Pincus. Pincus wrote that he had learned of the Class 1 drug positive in March when "a fellow came to me and said the Commission is finding positive tests and throwing them in the garbage... A couple weeks later he brought me a stack of papers that actually verified his claims." more

All Bets Off leads Burke’s Franklin trio

After suffering through early-season issues, All Bets Off appears to be back on his game. The 7-year-old stallion, who is within striking range of $3 million in career purses, leads three horses from the stable of trainer Ron Burke into Saturday’s $500,000 Ben Franklin Pace for older male pacers at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono. All Bets Off is the 3-1 second choice on the morning line behind 5-2 favorite McWicked. more

Indiana Commission approves sale of HoP

The Indiana Horse Racing Commission (IHRC) met on Wednesday, June 27, for a hearing to approve the transfer of ownership of the assets of Centaur Gaming to Caesars Entertainment. more

“Field” favored at 5-2 in Hambletonian Future

The first of three Hambletonian Future wagers is in the books and a total of $6,991 was wagered over the three-day period. Fourteen individual horses were listed for betting, with a 15th spot going to all other Hambletonian-eligible horses as the “field,” including fillies who are eligible to the Oaks and could race instead against the colts. The double-heat Hambletonian is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 4, at the Meadowlands. more

Megan Scran posts 1st training victory

Megan Scran posted her first-ever training victory in just her 16th career start on Tuesday afternoon at Monticello Raceway, with Foolish Virgin giving the 25 year old her milestone score. With Scran’s boyfriend, Scott Zeron, in the sulky, the 5-year-old pacing mare Foolish Virgin led wire to wire to win in 1:56.3 as the 2-5 betting favorite in the $5,000 conditioned pace. more

Captaintreachorous sires 1st winner at Mohawk

Captaintreachorous, the two-time Pacer of the Year and winner of $3.1 million, sired his first winner on Monday evening at Woodbine Mohawk Park. more

Kimelman steps down as NY Ag Fund trustee

The following is a statement from Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund trustee Mike Kimelman. “As of today, I will be stepping down as a Trustee of the Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund. It has been a privilege to help guide such a prestigious program as the New York Sire Stakes, however, I feel that I no longer have the amount of time to dedicate to this task to do the job the way I would like.” more

Ontario Gold winner honors cancer fundraiser

When Run Director trotted across the finish line at Woodbine Mohawk Park on Tuesday evening, the 3-year-old colt did more than just collect an Ontario Sires Stakes blanket and a share of the $97,200 Gold division purse. more

U.S. Supreme Court denies Michigan Board appeal

On Monday, June 18, the U.S. Supreme Court denied an appeal by the Michigan Gaming Control Board (MGCB) on the decision made by the Federal Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in the long-running case, John Moody, et al v. Michigan Gaming Control Board, et al, involving four Michigan harness racing drivers. more

Delaware Commission seeking presiding judge

The Delaware Harness Racing Commission is looking for a Presiding Judge to oversee harness racing meets in Delaware. Interested candidates please send resumes to: Department of Agriculture, DHRC, 2320 South DuPont Highway Dover, Del. 19901: ATTN: Donna Krol, or email to donna.krol@state.de.us more
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<td>Adios 3CP final (Mea)</td>
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<td>ONSS Gold 2FP (Whb)</td>
<td>PA All-Stars 2FT (YR)</td>
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<td>Battle Of Waterloo elims (GrHr)</td>
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<td>NYSS/Excelsior 2CT (TgDn)</td>
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**JULY 2018**

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