Despite Status Questions,
In The Arsenal Guns For Matron

In The Arsenal starts from post 3 in Thursday’s $193,200 Matron for 2-year-old pacing colts, with driver Brian Sears, with the eight-horse field including four Ron Burke-trained pacers, including New York Sires Stakes champ Cartoon Daddy (who finished second in the international Stallion to In The Arsenal) and Pennsylvania Sires Stakes champ Yankee Bounty.

“He acts good and feels good, and this will come down to racing luck,” said trainer Kelvin Harrison. “You have one guy in there with four horses and that always concerns me a little bit.”

Harrison said while In The Arsenal is programmed as a colt, some consider him a ridgling because one testicle has not fully descended. Harrison said the issue doesn’t bother him, nor does it seem to bother In The Arsenal, who has five wins in eight starts, including the Sheppard final at Yonkers and a pair of Grand Circuit contests at The Red Mile, good for $171,718 in earnings.

“It’s a questionable call,” Harrison said. “You can actually feel the one testicle and you can get your hand right around the other one. I’ve never considered him a ridgling.”

A son of American Ideal, In The Arsenal was bred by White Birch Farm, who bought him back at last year’s Harrisburg sale for $7,500. Harrison said In The Arsenal was checked prior to the sale and cataloged as a colt but now, because of insurance rules, any possible sale opportunities are delayed.

“For insurance reasons, when it comes to insuring for fertility as a stallion, he is not classified as colt unless the testicle is totally dropped into the scrotum,” explained Harrison. “That could happen today, tomorrow, next week, next month, or maybe never.

“There was a pretty good offer to sell on the table, but it was one of the things that he would be insured for fertility. And you can’t insure him for fertility as in the eyes of the insurance company he’s classified as a ridgling. I won’t say it killed the sale, but it slowed it down.

Continues on page 2 ▶▶▶▶
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“I said to Michael (Parisi, of White Birch Farm), if he runs the table it will drop down by itself so it won’t make any difference,” he added with a laugh, noting In The Arsenal’s pending starts in the Matron and Breeders Crown.

While In The Arsenal has won five times, he has never been sent off the betting favorite. Harrison said he believes the reason for lack of respect at the windows goes back to In The Arsenal’s initial starts. After a third and sixth in baby races, In The Arsenal finished sixth in his pari-mutuel debut.

“You have to go right back to the start because he wasn’t baby-raced pretty, as I was a little scared he might get hot,” he said. “I had Ronnie Pierce drive him and be conservative. Brian (Sears) drove him in his first start at the Meadowlands and he was off the gate a little bit and he tapped him to get on the gate, and he got away from him a little bit. That’s not a really good start.”

In The Arsenal then broke his maiden in his Sheppard elim at odds of 5-1, and he came back to win the final as the 2-1 second choice. He then drew the eight hole in a New York Sires Stakes at Yonkers, where he finished fifth.

Sickness then kept In The Arsenal sidelined for a month, with his return coming on Sept. 18 in the Standardbred at Delaware, Ohio. In The Arsenal made an early break in that race and finished far back, which concerned Harrison as he arrived in Lexington for the Grand Circuit meet.

“I thought we’d go to Delaware and get a good post and then go to Lexington. But he didn’t get a good post,” said Harrison. “He never got a big run at Delaware, so I was a little concerned going into Lexington that he wouldn’t be tight. But he had absolutely huge runs.”

What In The Arsenal did in Lexington was win his Bluegrass division the first week in a career-best 1:49.4, lighting up the board at odds of 25-1. He then captured his International Stallion Stakes division, with Artspeak finishing third in that colt’s first-ever loss.—By Gordon Waterstone

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Coleman Makes Equipment Change
On McWicked For Matron

The 3-year-old male divisions are two of the most contentious this season, and the Matron Stakes will certainly affect the chances of a couple of strong contenders for division honors.

In the 3-Year-Old Colt Trot (Race 10, estimated post time of 7:30 p.m.), Father Patrick will be starting from post 1 and looking to get back in the winner’s circle following his upset in the Carl Erskine Trot at Hoosier Park last Friday night.

Immediately after the race, Father Patrick’s regular driver, Yannick Gingras, reported that the colt was sick. But trainer Jimmy Tatker dismissed that, and obviously considered the colt in good health and thus entered him in the Matron.

Takter’s take on the Hoosier Park race?

“You have to throw that race out, the conditions were so bad that night,” said Takter. “He’s fine.”

Father Patrick’s toughest competition is usually his stablemate Nuncio, who beat him in the Kentucky Futurity, but Nuncio drew post 8 in the Matron, a significant handicap.

Also in the field is Ontario Super Final champion and Hambletonian third-place finisher Harper Blue Chip and Datsyuk, who caught Father Patrick on an off day in the Tompkins-Geers at Tioga on Aug. 17.

As for the 3-year-old pacing colts, the field includes Adios and Hempt Memorial champion McWicked, who starts from post 3 in Race 11. McWicked, however, hasn’t seen the winner’s circle since he won the Pennsylvania Sires Stakes championship on Sept. 7 at Harrah’s Philadelphia. But since that race, all five of his starts have come on half-mile tracks, and trainer Casie Coleman said the smaller oval is obviously not the best fit for the big son of McArdle.

She acknowledged McWicked was tired, and rightfully so after 18 starts, but she’s made an equipment change for the Matron in hopes of giving him a fresh outlook during the race.

“I closed his blinkers a little more to get him up in the rigging a bit more,” said Coleman while shopping for yearlings in Harrisburg.

“But getting him off the half (mile tracks) will help too. We trained him Monday and he seemed good. We just went in 2:10.” — By Kathy Parker
Can Harper Blue Chip Spring Matron Upset?

Thursday night’s $200,350 Matron for 3-year-old colt trotters is like a Jimmy Takter sandwich: Father Patrick in post 1 and Nuncio in the outside post 8, and the other six sandwiched in between. Included among the half dozen “other” horses between the pair of Takter-trained millionaires is Harper Blue Chip, who has quietly put together for himself a half-million-dollar winning campaign in 2014.

Harper Blue Chip comes into the Matron off a three-week layoff following his career-best 1:54.3 victory in the $222,500 Ontario Sires Stakes Super Final on Oct. 11 at Mohawk Racetrack. That effort brought the son of Majestic Son’s 2014 ledger to 13-6-2-3, with earnings of $565,054. That ranks him fourth this year on the divisional earnings list, behind only the Takter-trained Father Patrick, Nuncio and Trixton.

With more than a month gap between the Super Final and the Matron, trainer Mark Steacy decided to go the qualifying route with Harper Blue Chip to keep the trotter sharp. Steacy’s best-laid plans went slightly awry though when Harper Blue Chip made a break at the start and then another at the half of an Oct. 22 qualifier at Rideau Carleton, which is located not too far from Steacy’s home.

“He needed a tightener and he can be a little on the lazy side training so I said I’d put him behind the gate, not thinking he was going to make a break,” said Steacy, who was in the sulky himself that day. “They had just changed the surface and I guess he took a bad step at the gate and lost himself. I caught back up and then it was my fault at the half as he stepped on a wheel. The whole qualifier went haywire.”

With regular driver Sylvain Filion back in the bike for an Oct. 31 qualifier at Mohawk, things got back on track for Harper Blue Chip as he romped to a 12 ½-length win in 1:57. Off a four-win freshman campaign in 2013, Harper Blue Chip was a winter-book choice to be one of this year’s leading sophomore colt trotters. That said, all five of Harper Blue Chip’s wins this year have come on the Ontario-sired circuit, while he has come up short in his five ventures into open company.

Harper Blue Chip finished third in the $250,332 Goodtimes at Mohawk, fourth in the $500,000 Earl Beal Jr. Memorial at Pocono Downs, third in the $1 million Hambletonian at the Meadowlands, third in the $613,800 Canadian Trotting Classic and fourth in the $200,630 Simco at Mohawk.

“He’s always been maybe a step and a half behind the best ones in the Grand Circuit races, but he still picked up money,” said Steacy. “He’s not a superstar, but he’s a nice horse that knows how to kick it in for money.”

While Brian Sears has driven Harper Blue Chip in all three of his U.S. appearances this year, Tim Tetrick will get the Matron drive. Harper Blue Chip will start from post 3 as the 5-1 third choice on the morning line, behind Father Patrick (8-5) and Nuncio (5-2).

“I was really surprised Father Patrick went in the race as I didn’t expect that, especially after they said he was sick six days earlier (following a second-place finish in the Carl Erskine at Hoosier Park),” said Steacy. “And Nuncio has the eight hole, so he will have to work a little bit. But I think our horse is going in the race in good shape.”

Steacy said when Filion declined to make the trip to Delaware for the Matron, he turned to Tetrick. Sears is down to drive Sumatra in the race from post 2 for trainer Tom Fanning.

“I’ve used Timmy on horses before and we’ve had good luck together,” explained Steacy. “I like dealing with him. Obviously, he’s a great driver. My horse is easy to drive so I don’t think that will be a problem.”

Steacy said Harper Blue Chip will finish up his sophomore campaign in the Breeders Crown later this month at the Meadowlands. As for 2015, Steacy is unsure of the future.

“Either I sell him if the right offer comes along, or we keep him and race him next year,” said Steacy.—By Gordon Waterstone
13 Suggestions To Fix Harness Racing

Some of the best advice I’ve ever received on how to fix harness racing came from a fluffy Q & A feature we ran for nearly a decade in my old job with The Canadian Sportsman. Beyond asking people what music Satan would be playing on perpetual repeat in their version of Hell or what super power someone would pick, there was one serious Post Parade question everyone received: If you were the commissioner of all of harness racing, what would be the first thing you would do?

Though some of the advice is more than 10 years old, and some of it came from people no longer with us, the best of it bears repeating here, in the hope someone will pick up the gauntlet and be passionate and stubborn enough to guide some of these suggestions to fruition. I’ve also included three new suggestions from prominent industry names.

“Stop suspending trainers, drivers and owners and replace the suspensions with fines and I’d make them hurt. Then, I’d progress them. Money is what really sends a message, not days.”

Mike Hamilton (2010)
“I’d bring all parties to the table and mandate a gradual phasing out of pari-mutuel wagering, to be replaced by a North America-wide exchange betting system and state-of-the-art technology that would do to pari-mutuel wagering what eBay did to auctions and what iTunes did to music.”

Peter Heffering (2005)
“Amalgamate the USTA and Standardbred Canada. The industry is too small to have two bodies doing basically the same thing.”

Chuck Keeling (2009)
“Allow horseplayers to legitimately participate in the decision making process; in other words, make all industry stakeholders truly answer to its customers.”

Alan Kirschenbaum (2008)
“Develop a once-a-week, multi-track Pick-8 wager, in which all the slot tracks teamed up to seed the mutuel pool and offer a guarantee of a few hundred thousand dollars, with a carryover to the following weekend if it isn’t hit. Give someone the chance to get rich for a $20 investment. And spend money on marketing and television time to get people to notice.”

John Campbell (2005)
“Universalize our rules on racing, medication, everything... especially between Canada and the United States.”

Blair Burgess (2007)
“The thing I’d change is the overall shrillness...They’ve just gone crazy on the way they’re treating the membership on the (drug) testing. Any therapeutic positive tests, if I had my way, would only be fines, unless a person was a repeat offender. The due process has been done away with. We’re treating people that get positives with a mistake on a therapeutic medicine on a withdrawal time like pariahs, like some person is trying to gain an edge. That’s not what they’re doing.”

Kathy Wade-Vlaar (2013)
“Hire a team of the most talented Business grads to put together a five-year strategic plan that incorporates:
• A franchise model for racetracks (standardizing the on-track experience)
• Provincial branding
• Centralized services for efficiencies
Mandate that a percentage of the money from net revenues from tracks and wagering go into a research and development fund.”

Trond Smedshammer (2004)
“One thing that sets me off more than anything is qualifying standards... In stakes races when the owner pay stakes fees you should be able to race if you want to put up the starting fee. You shouldn’t have to worry about a horse making a break in the first start of the year off a qualifier and you’re going to miss a big race.”

Jeff Gural (2014)
“I would immediately take five percent of all of the purse money in states that have slots and use that money to hire two or three top marketing executives and give them the remainder as a budget to figure out how to market the sport and get it where it at least exists, like Thoroughbred racing does. Otherwise, the sport may eventually disappear, and then people will say, ‘You mean to tell me that these guys were getting $500 million a year from slots and didn’t take $25 or $30 million and use it to save their industry?’”

Jack Darling (2014)
“I would enact the whipping rule everywhere the way we have it in Ontario with the line in each hand, and I’d like to see it limited to wrist action, which is how they have it in Indiana. That would be perfect: a line in each hand and limited wrist action.”

Bob Marks (2014)
“I’d explore revenue sharing similar to the way the NFL does it. We’ll never be more than a regional sport as long as subsidiary revenues (slot money) are top heavy in some areas and non-existent in others.”

Dave Briggs was the editor of The Canadian Sportsman for 18 years and is an award-winning journalist. His column appears in HarnessRacing Weekend Preview in part through the advertising support of Hanover Shoe Farms and Woodbine Entertainment Group. Any opinions expressed in this column are his own and not necessarily those of the Horseman Publishing Company and its publications or its advertisers.
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Act Now Ready To Act Now In Matron 3FP

There are eight Matron finals for 2 and 3 year olds on tap Thursday night at Dover Downs, but arguably it’s the finale that appears most competitive on paper. In what seems to be one of the most evenly-matched races of the year, six of the eight entered in the $179,200 Matron for 3-year-old filly pacers (Race 12) have seasonal earnings between $300,000 and $340,000. The lone two holdouts aren’t too far behind, with earnings of $237,000 and $248,000.

“We gave her a break after Hambletonian day and freshened her up and...I think that made a difference for her.”

– Nik Drennan on Act Now

eligible to the Matron, numbers two through six are lining up behind the gate. Included among those half dozen are Pennsylvania Sires Stakes champion Weeper, Ontario Sires Stakes Super Final winner Skippin By, and New Jersey Sires Stakes winner Act Now, who has been installed the 5-2 morning-line favorite.

Trained by Nik Drennan, Act Now has won five of 12 starts this year, including the $100,000 New Jersey Sires Stakes final, a $110,000 Glen Garnsey Memorial division at The Red Mile, and the $150,854 Lady Maud at Yonkers Raceway last time out on Oct. 25. A $40,000 yearling purchase by Joe Davino and Patrick O’Brien, the daughter of Western Ideal has earned $307,444 this year and is just shy of the half-million-dollar mark in career earnings.

“They are all evenly-matched and I think the trip will determine the final outcome,” said Drennan. “To win the division she’d have to win the Matron and the Breeders Crown. Those next two races will decide it.”

Drennan said a three-week break after Act Now’s fourth-place finish in the Mistletoe Shalee on July 12 at the Meadowlands has been key to the filly’s late-season surge.

“We gave her a break after Hambletonian day and freshened her up, and everybody else kept racing. I think that made a difference for her,” said Drennan. “The other ones raced and kind of tired themselves out. I think we’re a little fresher now.”

While Brian Sears has been the primary driver of Act Now, Drennan turned to George Brennan for the Lady Maud.

Brennan, who was in the bike one time earlier this year for Act Now’s third-place finish in a New Jersey Sires Stakes preliminary, directed the filly to wins in the Lady Maud elim and final, the latter of which she won by 5 ½ lengths in 1:53.

“She’s a horse that likes change so I think a change in the driver and this and that helped her. She responds to change, whether it’s equipment or routine. When she gets stuck in a routine she gets bored, so you have to change up a few little things and she kinds of perked up. Even a change of scenery.”

In addition to Color’s A Virgin, another 3-year-old pacing filly not in the Matron but maybe Crown bound is Glen Garnsey division winner Nat A Virgin. That filly will compete in Race 9, a conditioned event for fillies and mares, at Woodbine Friday night.—By Gordon Waterstone
Breakfast And Races
Sunday At Yonkers

The first of six Sunday matinee programs at Yonkers Raceway is scheduled for this Sunday, with post time for the 12-race card at 11 a.m. The first five races on the card will be simulcast to France, where the first race will go off at 5 p.m. in Paris.

The first five races are all trots and all are being contested at a distance of 1 ¼ miles, with the races all starting at the three-quarter pole on the backstretch. The purses have been increased for the five races and all have oversized fields, with three having 10 starters and two with 12 starters (eight on the gate, the others are trailers). Horses not earning purse money in the 12-horse races will each receive $750, with the non-purse winners in the 10-horse races each receiving $500.

Advance wagering on the Sunday card will be available at Yonkers on Saturday. The overseas pools through the French PMU cannot be comiled with the North American pools, although both parties are hoping a future change in regulations will allow it.

Race 2 is the $46,000 Open Trot (an increase from $35,000 last weekend), with 12 horses lining up behind the gate. Post 8 is never ideal at Yonkers, but starting from that spot in the Open with all 11 horses inside of her is the 4-year-old mare NF Happenstance with driver Jeff Gregory.

““It’s probably not the best place to be starting from, is it?” Gregory said with a laugh. “One thing though with a mile-and-a-quarter race, there should be a lot of action. So it might not be as detrimental as what you think. The mare I’m driving can leave real good, so if I can leave and get a spot, it might not be the end of the world. It’s definitely going to be interesting.”

Gregory said while there are negatives about the Sunday matinees (such as 7:10 a.m. Lasix time for the first race), they are offset by the chance that the idea will take off and the French pools will eventually be comiled.

“They are hoping that they are really going to like the product and the horses they are betting on, and get the pools eventually comiled down the road,” said Gregory.

“It’s probably not an ideal situation for anybody, but I think that we all understand the upside is well worth giving up our Sundays,” he continued. “I think the guys at Yonkers are willing to bite the bullet hoping that this will turn into something good for the track and the horsemen’s association. It’s not ideal, but I think everybody is taking one for the team.”

In order to help on-track attendance, Yonkers has announced that anyone purchasing a Saturday live program will receive a free Sunday program. Also, the track will have free egg sandwiches and coffee trackside between 10 a.m. and 12 noon. Free “Quick-Pick” bets on the early daily double and exactas will be given away to the first 200 existing or newly-enrolled Empire City Bets members. A free gift will also be given away while supplies list, and there will be a free drawing to win dinner for two at any of the racetrack’s restaurants. — By Gordon Waterstone
Father Patrick’s Double-Duty
Must Be Approved By PA Commission

The owners of Father Patrick, with most in attendance at the Standardbred Horse Sale in Harrisburg, Pa., decided on Tuesday, Nov. 4, that they will both race and breed the horse in 2015.

Father Patrick will not be the first horse to handle double-duty in North America. This year Wishing Stone stood at stud at Deo Volente Farm in New Jersey and made his first racing start in a qualifier on June 20 at the Meadowlands. Father Patrick, however, will be the first horse to breed and race the same year in order to comply with the rules of some stakes sponsors which require a horse to race as a 4 year old in order for his progeny to be eligible for nomination.

The Father Patrick Stable, which is comprised of Diamond Creek Farm, John Fielding, Christina Takter, Brittany Farms, Brixton Medical, and the partnership group of Marvin Katz, Al Libfeld and Sam Goldband, agreed to the rare double, but with the caveat that the 4-year-old son of Cantab Hall will be bred to only 60 mares in 2015.

Father Patrick will stand at stud at Diamond Creek’s Wellsville, Pa., farm. With Father Patrick’s trainer, Jimmy Takter, based in Allentown, N.J., the dual assignment will require about a five-hour round trip to shuttle the horse between the two farms. Because he will be both leaving the state of Pennsylvania and racing, the Father Patrick Stable will have to request written permission from the Pennsylvania State Harness Racing Commission in order for his resulting progeny to be deemed Pennsylvania-eligible.

While the details are still being ironed out, Diamond Creek’s Adam Bowden said he expects Father Patrick will have a different breeding schedule than other stallions.

“His breeding schedule will be engineered around the horse and how Jimmy wants to schedule his training,” said Bowden. “We’ll start breeding him Feb. 15, but we’ll probably finish the middle to the end of April, or early May, so Jimmy can have him trained down to start racing for the stakes season. Obviously, that means we’re going to want to breed mares to him that fit his schedule. We’ll want maiden mares, and certainly not mares that are going to be foaling in late April or later.”

Because there are six ownership interests (Katz, Libfeld and Goldband as one owner), there will likely only be 20-25 outside bookings available. The fee for those mares has been set at $30,000, which could mean earnings of more than $500,000 if the stallion has good fertility.

In other stud news, Deo Volente Farm announced at Harrisburg that Hambletonian champion Trixton, who was retired from racing in September due to injury, has been fully syndicated and will stand for a fee of $12,000.— By Kathy Parker
Big Prices, But Average Price Down After 3 Sessions

Through the first three sessions of the annual Standardbred Horse Sales Company’s yearling sale in Harrisburg, Pa., both consignors and buyers, as well as sale management, were perplexed. The average price through three sessions had dropped by 5.1 percent, with the first two sessions running behind 2013 figures by 7.5 percent and the third session posting a 5.1 increase to make up part of the lost ground.

The average price through the first three sessions was $37,718 for 810 horses sold, compared with an average of $39,944 for the first three sessions in 2013. Just as notably, the median price—the point where half the horses sell for more and half for less—declined by $1,000, dropping from $26,000 to $25,000, or 3.8 percent.

Paul F. “Pete” Spears, CEO of the Sales company, told Harness Racing Communications late Wednesday that he had no clear indication of the soft spots in the market.

“I’ve been walking around and asking people what they think of the sale and many people have said to me that they’re scratching their heads, too. Certain horses that were going to bring too much money for them — so they didn’t bother to look at — suddenly they’re bargains, but because they didn’t look at them, they didn’t bid. Other horses that they wanted to go after they suddenly found they couldn’t touch, so it’s been a very schizophrenic sale.”

Two yearlings brought prices of $300,000-plus in the opening session on Monday, with Hip 139, a Muscle Hill colt out of Brooklyn 3, 1:57.2, bought by trainer Jonas Czernyson, acting as agent, with a bid of $390,000. Brooklyn, a daughter of Conway Hall, hails from a top maternal family, with her third dam, Cream Puff, producing Creamy Mimi (the dam of French Laundry) and her fourth dam Peace A Pie, producing Creamy Mimi (the dam of Order By Stable, for Swedish businessman Lennart Agren, who bought five yearlings at the Lexington Selected Sale, among them The Perfect Lindy, the first foal of world champion Highscore Kemp 3, 1:51.4, for $320,000.

Three yearlings were sold for six-figure prices on Wednesday, Hip 751, a filly by Western Terror consigned by All American Harnessedbreds, was bought by John Como Jr. with a bid of $200,000. The filly, foaled Jan. 27, 2013, is the first of Makes You Wonder p,2, 1:55.4; 3, 1:54.4, a Jenna’s Beach Boy full sister to Shanghai Lil and half sister to Bolt The Duer, with those two million-dollar winners both raced by the Como family.

Also breaking the six-figure bracket was Hip 739, a Cantab Hall colt out of Love To Lindy (by Kadabra), who was bought by Brixton Medical, for $130,000. Preferred Equine Marketing consigned the colt on behalf of breeder Lindy Racing Stable. Bengt Agerup’s Brixton Medical shares ownership of this year’s Hambletonian champion Trixton.

Hip 568, named Pizza Queen, brought a final bid of $100,000 from trainer Noel Daley. The filly by Credit Winner was consigned by Peninsula Farm for breeder Valley High Stable. The filly is out of the Self Possessed daughter Armbr Domino 3, 1:55.2 ($246,004).

Also getting close to six figures at $90,000 was Hip 832, a colt by McArdle consigned by Northwood Bloodstock Agency for Andray Farm. The colt is the third foal of the Western Hanover mare Philadelphia p,4, 1:52.1f ($160,537). Named McPhil, the colt was bought by Ed James, who owns this year’s $1 million-winning McArdle colt McWicked.

Through three sessions, the highest performing sector of the market was trotting colts, which had generated an average price of $43,661, but just barely as pacing colts averaged $43,346. Last year pacing colts and trotting colts finished the sale virtually tied in average price with pacing colts averaging $43,466. Last year pacing colts and trotting colts finished the sale virtually tied in average price with pacing colts generating an average of $38,998 while trotting colts averaged $38,955.

The final session will determine if the sale finishes close to its 2013 average of $34,501. Last year’s final session posted an average price of $18,194 for 258 horses sold.
Muscle Diamond Ready For Matron Test

So far in his brief racing career, trotter Muscle Diamond’s strength has been his attitude. It’s a trait he might have inherited from his mom, former star Windylane Hanover. “He’s a lot like his mom,” trainer Brett Bittle said. “His mom wasn’t a big horse. Her biggest asset was her determination, and he’s kind of the same way. He’s always charging at the wire and giving us what he’s got. His attitude and his determination are his biggest assets.”

Bittle trained Windylane Hanover throughout her career, which concluded in 2005 with 21 wins in 60 starts and $1.15 million in purses. She won the 2002 Hambletonian Oaks and received the 2003 Dan Patch Award for best older female trotter.

“She was great to us and to come back and get one of her colts and do well with him is pretty special,” Bittle said.

Muscle Diamond has won two of seven races this year and finished worse than second only twice. He has earned $111,369 for owners Bittle, Charles Keller III, Charles Keller IV, and Dan Bittle.

On Thursday, Muscle Diamond competes in the $237,500 Matron Stakes for 2-year-old male trotters at Dover Downs. Muscle Diamond will start from post 2 with driver John Campbell and is 9-1 on the morning line.

“He’s been fun so far this year,” Bittle said about Muscle Diamond, a son of Muscle Hill who was purchased for $40,000 at the 2013 Lexington Selected Sale. “I just raced him sparingly early on because he’s very immature. He was kind of a waiting game all winter. He just wasn’t a big, strong muscular colt. He just needed time, like a lot of them do.

“The way we managed him for this year is mostly for next year. We decided to go easy with him early in the year and he’s come around.”

Muscle Diamond’s seven starts are the fewest of any horse in the Matron. His best win time of 1:53.4, set in winning a division of the International Stallion Stakes at The Red Mile in October, is tied for fifth fastest by any 2-year-old trotter this season.

After going off stride in his debut at the Meadowlands in July, Muscle Diamond has finished among the top three in every start.

“I think he darted away from something on the inside of the track,” Bittle said. “At any rate, we talked about it and decided to put trotting hobbles on him. It just steadied him up and gave him some confidence.”

Bittle plans to send Muscle Diamond to the Breeders Crown, but first comes the Matron.

“It’s not going to be his game there because it’s a speed-oriented track,” Bittle said about Thursday’s race. “We haven’t been leaving with him and he’s a come-from-behind horse. We’ll see how the race plays out.” (HRC)

Always B Miki Supplemented To Breeders Crown

The 3-year-old colt pacer Always B Miki, the winner of four races in a row and eight of his last nine, will be supplemented to the upcoming Breeders Crown at the Meadowlands.

Always B Miki has won 11 of 18 races this year and $778,982. For his career, the son of Always A Virgin has won 13 of 30 starts and $914,366. He is owned by Bluewood Stable, Val D’Or Farms, and Roll The Dice Stable, which bred the colt. Joe Holloway trains Always B Miki.

The cost to supplement is $62,500.

“The partners have spoken and we all agree our plan is to supplement Miki to the Breeders Crown,” ownership partner Mitchel Skolnick said. “The horse deserves a shot in the Breeders Crown. He’s done everything he can, he deserves to be there. That’s what it basically came down to.”

Always B Miki is coming off a 2 1/2-length win over Lime-light Beach in last week’s $275,000 Monument Circle at Hoosier Park. His recent victories also include the Indiana Sires Stakes championship and a division of the Tattersalls Pace at The Red Mile.

The colt has not finished worse than second in 11 consecutive starts, including a runner-up effort to He’s Watching in the Meadowlands Pace despite being stuck on the outside throughout the race.

Always B Miki ranks fifth in earnings for all 3-year-old pacers this season, behind McWicked, JK Endofanera, All Bets Off, and He’s Watching. Divisional honors could be decided by the final stakes races of the season.

“The Breeders Crown is more important (than division honors),” Skolnick said. “He’s done everything necessary to deserve the opportunity to race in the Breeders Crown. That’s the way we feel about it. We’ll see what happens after that.” (HRC)

Breeders Crown Supplements Due Monday

It’s final decision time for foreign invitees, supplementals, and entries for the Breeders Crown finals slated for Friday, Nov. 21, and Saturday, Nov. 22, at the Meadowlands. Invited foreign horses must declare by noon on Friday, Nov. 7.

Supplemental declarations for the 3-year-old and open events are due and payable on Monday, Nov. 10, 2014 by 12 noon in the racing secretary’s office (877) 782-2537 at the Meadowlands. All amounts below are listed in U.S. dollars and payable as such.

There are no supplements for the 2-year-old races. The starting fee is included in the supplemental amount. A one-time supplemental payment makes a horse eligible to all subsequent years’ Breeders Crown events under the normal schedule of payments.

Continues on page 13
Horses eligible to the Breeders Crown events must enter by 9 a.m., Tuesday, Nov. 11, also at the Meadowlands race office. Eliminations, if needed, will occur on Friday, Nov. 14 and Saturday, Nov. 15.

Elimination races, if necessary, will be raced for a minimum purse of $25,000 each. If an elimination is required because more than 11, but less than 14 horses are entered, there will be a single elimination to “qualify” only enough horses that can be accommodated by the number of positions in the front tier of the starting gate.

If there are eliminations, post positions in the final will be determined by an open draw with the exception that Elimination winners in an order determined by lot, will draw for post positions number one through five in the final. All other finalists, including foreign invitees, will be placed in an open draw for the remaining post positions. Those horse(s) that receive a bye into the final will be in the open draw for post positions in the Final.

Supplements for 3YO Events—$62,500
Supplements for Open Trot—$62,500
Supplements for Open Pace—$50,000
Supplements for Mare Pace—$31,250
Supplements for Mare Trot—$31,250

Four Breeders Crown distaff events will be raced Friday, Nov. 21, and the remaining eight Breeders Crown finals will be raced on Saturday, Nov. 22. Both nights have a regular Meadowlands post time of 7:15 p.m. (ET). (Breeders Crown)

Graduate Series Revamped For 4 Year Olds
The Meadowlands is pleased to announce the $1 million Graduate Series, a new initiative designed to provide racing opportunities for 4-year-old trotters and pacers in 2015.

While the schedule will not be finalized until the December stakes meetings, the series will offer three legs tentatively beginning in late May with $50,000-estimated legs at Tioga Downs, continue through June at the Meadowlands with the purse increasing to $75,000 (est.), then $100,000 (est.) for legs two and three. The Graduate finals will be raced at the Meadowlands in early July with the purse for each gate guaranteed at $250,000.

Meadowlands chairman Jeff Gural has been vocal in his advocacy of keeping the equine stars of the sport on the track beyond their sophomore season and spoke on the intent of the series.

“I consider keeping the best horses on the racetrack a priority to generate fan interest in racing. This series will provide what the connections of those horses have indicated a need for, a chance to race against horses of their own age until mid-season, when they will graduate into the open stakes,” said Gural. “I appreciate the support of Tommy Luchento, Leo McNamara and the New Jersey horsemen in recognizing the importance of creating races that will appeal to our customers by bringing back recognizable names that hopefully will attract new younger customers while appealing to our regular customer base as well.” (Meadowlands)

Meadowlands Implements Rules Limiting Trainer Entries
Beginning with the 2014-2015 season at the Meadowlands, there will be a new condition attached to all late- and early-closer finals that limits the number of horses a trainer can enter into the final of those events. All late closer and early closer Finals will carry the following clause:

“No trainer may race more than two horses in this race. This does not apply to any horses raced in a trainer’s stable from the first charted race of the horse’s career. Any trainer change that applies to the spirit of this condition must be made a minimum of 30 days in advance of the race date to be considered valid for the purpose of this race.”

This rule has been implemented in response to our customers’ complaints regarding trainers having an abundance of horses in one race while being sure not to discourage any horsemen from purchasing yearlings. This clause does allow a trainer to enter any number of horses he wishes into the final of a late closer or early closer, provided he or she has been that horse’s trainer since its first charted race, including baby races and qualifiers. However, a trainer will be limited to entering two horses that he or she has not trained since its first charted race.

“This rule is in the best interest of the betting public, the horsemen and the harness racing industry as a whole,” said Meadowlands chairman Jeff Gural. “The purpose of this rule is to address complaints we have received from our customers and to avoid discouraging anyone from purchasing yearlings. We recognize that if a trainer should happen to have three good horses that fit the condition of a race that he or she has trained since the beginning of his career, he or she should be allowed to enter all three. This rule impacts only horses that are no longer racing for their original trainer.”

In addition, a trainer change between the rounds of eliminations and finals for the events at the Meadowlands will not be allowed simply to ensure a certain horse can enter the final. The trainer change must be made a minimum of 30 days prior to the date of the race, thus the horse will have to race through the entire series for the new trainer. (Meadowlands)

Cane Pace Moves To Meadowlands In 2015
The Cane Pace will find a new home in 2015. For the first time, the first leg of the pacing Triple Crown will head to the Meadowlands. It will join the star-studded Hambletonian Day card on Aug. 8, 2015.

“Having the best 3-year-old pacers in the sport competing on Hambletonian Day is going to be great for the Meadowlands and Hambletonian Day,” said Meadowlands chairman (Continues on page 14)
Jeff Gural. “The Cane Pace is so rich in its history and it deserves a place on harness racing’s biggest stage and adding it to the Hambletonian Day card will do just that.”

In addition to the Cane Pace, it’s filly counterpart, the Shady Daisy, will also join the Hambletonian Day program. The Meadowlands will also be adding a “sister race” to the John Cashman Memorial for the aged mare trotters on Hambletonian Day.

There will be some adjustments made to the conditions of the Cane due to its new location on the racing calendar.

“The major change to the race will be that it will not contest eliminations, which we feel will make the race more appealing to the leading 3-year-old pacers,” said director of racing operations Darin Zoccali. “No eliminations will also enhance the purse of the Cane Pace final for 2015.” (Meadowlands)

Tailgunner Hanover A “Miracle Baby”

When trainer Ray Schnittker looked at yearling pacer Tailgunner Hanover, he saw a resemblance to half-brother Riggins. Schnittker trained Riggins, who earned $924,758 during a stakes-winning career.

But the fact he saw anything at all was something of a miracle.

Tailgunner Hanover is an embryo transfer foal out of Towner’s Image, who received the 1993 O’Brien Award for best 3-year-old female pacer. In 2010, Towner’s Image nearly died while giving birth to a Western Ideal foal, which passed away.

Towner’s Image’s cervix was destroyed during the birth. After two unsuccessful attempts at embryo transfer in 2010 and 2011, her cervix was surgically repaired and she produced an embryo very late in 2012. She was 22 years old at the time. The resulting foal was Tailgunner Hanover.

“If she was any less tough than she is, because she’s really a tough old mare, she would have died,” said Dr. Bridgette Jablonsky, the farm manager at Hanover Shoe Farms. “(Tailgunner Hanover) is a real miracle baby. He shouldn’t be here.

“It’s something akin to when a couple is just about to give up on having a child and a miracle happens. Getting that embryo was quite a miracle; we didn’t think we would. He might be this great mare’s last hurrah.”

Riggins was Towner’s Image’s most successful previous foal, but the mare produced four other horses that earned six figures during their careers: Townslight Hanover, Tycoon Hanover, Prettiestgalintown, and Taco Hanover. All but one of her previous 10 foals won at least one race.

Tailgunner Hanover sold for $50,000 to Schnittker.

“Riggins was a really nice horse and I saw he was the same type of look,” Schnittker said. “And he was very reasonable. Hopefully it works out half as good as Riggins.

“When most people have a good horse out of a family, they tend to go back to the same family. That’s what I did. Hopefully it works.”

On some level, it’s already worked out better than anyone ever expected. (HRC)
Harness Racing Leaders
Compiled by the USTA—through November 4, 2014 (week difference Oct. 29-Nov. 4).

Leading North American-Based Money-Winning Horses

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Leading Money-Winning Drivers

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Leading Money-Winning Trainers

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Leaders Of The Week
Ranked by wins for Oct. 29-Nov. 4 from results at major North American pari-mutuel tracks.

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<td>Billy Dobson</td>
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Trainers

<p>| Ron Burke                    | Wins | 22 |
| René Allard                  |     | 9  |
| Richard Moreau               |     | 7  |
| Virgil Morgan Jr             |     | 6  |
| Bob Johnson                  |     | 6  |
| Conor Flynn                  |     | 6  |
| Daniel Gill                  |     | 6  |
| Rick Plano                   |     | 6  |
| Robert Lounsbury             |     | 6  |
| C. Brian Loney               |     | 5  |
| Colin Johnson                |     | 5  |
| Michael Palone               |     | 5  |
| Tracy Brainard               |     | 5  |
| Tyler Nostadt                |     | 5  |</p>
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**Share Holiday Greetings!**

The Horseman’s annual Holiday Issue is the #1 choice for sending Season’s Greetings to friends and colleagues, and promote stallions for the coming year.

**SPECIAL DISCOUNTED RATES AVAILABLE**

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