Takter Hopes To Cash Big In TVG With The Bank

This weekend’s cards at the Meadowlands feature the finals of the TVG Free-For-All Series and Final Four freshman stakes, as well as a pair of events for sophomore fillies of both gaits. As usual, trainer Jimmy Takter is overloaded with starters in the 10 races, including The Bank, who will take on older horses in the $400,000 TVG final for male trotters on Saturday night.

By virtue of his Breeders Crown win on Oct. 24, The Bank was eligible to be invited, and Takter took advantage of the opportunity. The only other 3-year-old to tackle the older horses in the TVG came in 2013 in the inaugural year of the series when Captain-treacherous finished sixth by two lengths.

“"If he doesn’t win it, nobody will say anything. And if he does win the race, do you know the tremendous value it is for the horse?””
– Jimmy Takter on The Bank’s start in the TVG final

The Bank will start from post 2 with David Miller driving. Takter will also start Master Of Law from post 6 with Brett Miller in the sulky. The field includes Resolve, who won last weekend’s six-horse final TVG preliminary at the Meadowlands, who starts from post 4, and point-leader Flanagan Memory, who starts from post 5. However, Flanagan Memory comes into the race having not won in seven starts since his score in the $301,500 John Cashman Memorial on Hambletonian day at the Meadowlands.

“We got lucky and got a good post,” Takter said about The Bank, who is less than $6,000 away from $1 million in earnings this year. “He can leave the gate and he can get into a good position.

“If he doesn’t win it, nobody will say anything. And if he does win the race, do you know the tremendous value it is for the horse?”

The first stake on Saturday’s card is the $144,000 Continental victory for 3-year-old filly trotters. The race drew just four starters, undoubtedly due to the presence of world champions Mission Brief and Wild Honey. While Takter’s Wild Honey bested the Ron Burke-trained Mission Brief in the Kentucky Filly Futurity and Breeders Crown, the tables were turned last time out in the Matron at Dover Downs. In that race, Mission Brief drew clear from Wild Honey by 5 ¾ lengths in a world-record 1:50.2.
“If Mission Brief is as good as she was last week, it will be tough,” Takter admitted.

Wild Honey drew post 1 and Mission Brief post 2. The 2014 Trainer of the Year said he plans on an equipment change on Wild Honey for the Continental Victory.

“I made some changes. I am going to pull all her shoes and race her barefoot,” he said. “The only other time she raced barefoot was in the Hambo (Oaks, which she won). It will be interesting.”

The TVG Series added races for mares this year, and six will line up behind the gate in the $200,000 final for trotters. All six raced in last weekend's final preliminary, with the event won by Shake It Cerry in 1:53.2. Favorite Bee A Magician finished fourth, with the judges subsequently suspending driver Brian Sears for 15 days for “lack of judgment in his driving performance.” Sears will be in the sulky behind Bee A Magician in the TVG final after appealing the ruling.

Miller will also drive Shake It Cerry, who raced on Lasix for the first time last Friday night. Takter said he should have added the anti-bleeding medication earlier.

“I said to David Miller when he went out on the track last week, ‘David, if I would have had her on Lasix in the Breeders Crown, I would have won seven and you would have won only four,’” he said with a laugh. “She was bleeding on and off for me all summer. I think the tire blew when she went 1:49.4 (second by a nose to JL Cruze in the $250,000 Graduate final on July 11) and she extended herself so much.”

While Race 6 on Saturday night is not a stakes event, the appearance of Takter’s 2013 Adios champion Sunfire Blue Chip makes the $17,000 contest interesting. The son of American Ideal was retired at the conclusion of his 4-year-old campaign in 2014 and was standing stud at Tara Hills Stud in Ontario. But with limited breeding to just 37 mares, the decision was made to bring the son of American Ideal back to the racetrack.

Sunfire Blue Chip made his 2015 debut on Nov. 14 at The Downs at Mohican Sun Pocono, finishing eighth in a $30,000 open in what was his first appearance since capturing the Prix D’Ete at Hippodrome 3R on Sept. 21, 2014. Saturday night’s start will be Sunfire Blue Chip’s second upon his return.

“There’s no worth to a stallion that only gets 35 mares,” Takter explained of bringing back Sunfire Blue Chip, who is owned in part by his wife, Christina. “How are you going to make money on that? You’re better off racing.”

Takter said Sunfire Blue Chip’s comeback has gone better than expected.

“It’s just amazing,” said Takter, who is pointing Sunfire Blue Chip to the Levy Series at Yonkers next spring. “This horse had a lot of issues his whole life, but he’s come back unbelievably good. He’s back now and raced one start and got a bad trip. He is fresh and sound and should be a good contender (on Saturday).” — By Gordon Waterstone
TVG FINALS & FALL FINAL FOUR
Post Time 7:00 pm

FRIDAY
NOV. 20

$200,000
TVG Free-For-All Pacing Mares Championship

$200,000
TVG Free-For-All Trotting Mares Championship

$409,950*
Goldsmith Maid
Sponsored by Purple Haze Stables

$385,250*
Three Diamonds
Sponsored by White Birch Farm

SATURDAY
NOV. 21

$400,000
TVG Free-For-All Pacing Championship

$400,000
TVG Free-For-All Trotting Championship

$489,400*
Valley Victory
Sponsored by The Hambletonian Society

$413,000*
Governors Cup

$200,000*
Continental Victory

$200,000*
Tarport Hap

Please Note: The Late Pick 4 has moved from Race 7 to Race 8

*estimated purse
Suspension Of Sears Points To Systemic Flaw

Try to put aside your condemnation of any number of people in the Brian Sears/Jeff Gural story from last weekend for a second (if you weren’t tuned in last weekend, keep reading and I’ll bring you up to speed). The whole fiasco puts a spotlight out the systemic flaw in the game.

How is the sport ever going to survive, let alone thrive, when the main players all have competing interests and masters to serve?

Just follow the money.

Bettors typically want full effort and fairness and transparency and value for their wagering dollars and, for the most part, don’t place the welfare of the horses ahead of that. Racetracks, if they are run by smart people, want, first and foremost, to protect their customers to keep the money flowing.

The vast majority of horsepeople place the welfare of the horse ahead of everything else because that’s critical to the participants’ bottom line, which sometimes puts them at odds with bettors and tracks. Unlike betting on a professional football game, when you know all the parties stand to gain the most from the same thing—winning—the main parties involved in the horse racing equation don’t always have the same motivations.

It would be nice if all three main racing parties took a big-picture approach to what was best for the game itself to sustain it for all. Betting customers are critical to that, of course. But no one should expect the parties to look too far beyond their own self interest. Sadly, that’s business and human nature. Herein lies the problem and why there’s no easy solution, as the Sears/Gural case illustrates.

The Friday the 13th drive in question at the Meadowlands Racetrack certainly deserves scrutiny. But in the aftermath, apart from people universally commenting either for or against Gural’s passion in the matter, the social media pundits seem to be lining up predominantly on one of two sides:

1. The bettors were screwed, Gural, the principal owner of the track, was right to be “flabbergasted” at Sears’ lack of effort and the New Jersey Racing Commission was correct in punishing Sears because he broke a serious racing rule by not driving Bee A Magician to win—though most people question the severity of Sears’ 15-day punishment as compared to well-established precedents.

2. Sears was doing what was right for the animal and himself. Bee A Magician has had a long campaign, has been having issues lately with tying up, and Sears’ livelihood depends on him doing what’s best to keep the horse, trainer and owners happy, not the bettors. This brings up Gural’s call for more transparency from trainers about their animals, but it’s not hard to buy into the argument that we should place the welfare of the animals on which the entire game is founded ahead of everything else.

I wish judges everywhere actually enforced the rules on the books and did so with as much consistency as possible. It is troubling that the very next night—mere hours after Meadowlands participants were allegedly read the riot act about lack of effort, etc.—Brett Miller appears to have been guilty of a drive on JK Endofanera that was not as aggressive as it should have been. Yet, Miller wasn’t punished. And we wonder why we’ve lost so many betting customers.

The problem is, Sears and all drivers are in a bind between obeying the rules and protecting their jobs. You can say that’s why the best of them get the big bucks, but that’s not really fair.

You can’t blame the drivers for doing what they perceive to be best for their careers by doing what’s best for the horse and/or the trainers and owners. As for Gural, while I wish he would sometimes take a day for a sober second thought before he acted, I don’t blame him in the least for being upset and demanding better. I wish more track owners were like him in that last regard.

I also don’t blame him for asking trainers to be more transparent, so long as the bettors appreciate trainers are filing reports on animals that can’t talk and that those reports are not guarantees of performance and should not be taken too seriously. While I suspect most savvy bettors don’t need them and will make up their own minds anyway based on their own handicapping instincts and strategies, the more information we can provide in the name of disclosure, the better.

That won’t stop the bettors from complaining, of course. They will just find something else to complain about and that’s understandable. People tend not to be at their cheeriest when losing money, especially when it’s lost wagering something on which they believe they hold an educated opinion.

People tend not to be at their cheeriest when losing money, especially when it’s lost wagering something on which they believe they hold an educated opinion.

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.
Ohio Standardbred Stallion owners

For a stallion’s foals to be eligible to the rich Ohio Sires Stakes program, the stallion must be registered with the Ohio State Racing Commission by NOVEMBER 30, 2015

(All forms & payments MUST be postmarked by Nov. 30, 2015 for your stallion’s foals to be eligible in 2016)

2016 Fees
Ohio Standardbred Stallion Renewal: $25.00
New Ohio Standardbred Stallion Registration: $100.00

Report of mares bred to your Ohio Standardbred Stallion in 2015 is also due to the Ohio State Racing Commission by NOVEMBER 30, 2015

Download all forms at www.racing.ohio.gov/Development.html

For questions or concerns, contact
Kimberly Rinker
Ohio Standardbred Development Fund Administrator
Ohio State Racing Commission
77 South High Street, 18th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-779-0269 or kim.rinker@rc.state.oh.us
Jim Campbell Taking On Favorites In Governor’s Cup

The $489,400 Valley Victory Trot is the richest of the stakes of the big weekend cards at the Meadowlands. Dog Gone Lucky brings a four-race winning streak into the Valley Victory final, which makes the pacing counterpart, the $413,000 Governor’s Cup, appear a bit more competitive, at least on paper.

The field for the Governor’s Cup, Race 8 on the Meadowlands Saturday night card, includes Breeders Crown champion Boston Red Rocks and Crown runner-up Big Top Hanover, but this field is deep. Big Top Hanover nosed out Boston Red Rocks on the wire in a Governor’s Cup elimination, and Big Top will have the edge in the final at the start with post 4 versus post 8 for Boston Red Rocks.

Leaving from post 1 will be Pretty Boy Hill, who finished third in the Matron and fifth in the Crown (after starting from post 9), while half-mile world champion Spider Man Hanover will start beside him in post 2. Ron Burke sends out four contenders, led by Big Top Hanover with Pretty Boy Hill, JK Will Power and Check Six rounding out his Governor’s Cup line-up card.

Trainer Jim Campbell has a couple of freshmen he thinks have a chance to be factors in the race: Katies Rocker (post 5) and Show The Fashion (post 3). Both are homebreds owned by Jules Siegel’s Fashion Farms.

Katies Rocker won his Governor’s Cup elimination by a nose over JK Will Power. The victory was his sixth of the season in 12 starts.

“He raced very good. He dug in when that horse came to him in the stretch,” noted Campbell.

Katies Rocker is by Rocknroll Hanover and out of Just Wait Kate, the winner of the 2005 Jugette and a sister to Kikikatie, whose offspring includes the sire Rockin Image. Although his family tree is strong, Katies Rocker is a gelding.

“He was gelded back in March,” said Campbell. “He just wasn’t paying attention. He wasn’t mean or anything, but a male horse has to show a lot (to stay a stud colt). We’re looking to make money on the racetrack first.”

Although Katies Rocker won a Bluegrass division at the Red Mile by a decisive three lengths, the youngster was not entered in the Breeders Crown.

“He was eligible, and we didn’t race the second week in Lexington, but that was because we knew he had the New Jersey Futurity (Oct. 24). He raced really good in Lexington, but we thought it was too much to ask him to ship to Canada and race against the best. We thought his best chance to make money was to get him back to New Jersey, and go to the Futurity, Matron and Governor’s Cup,” explained Campbell.

Campbell’s other Governor’s Cup contender is Show The Fashion, a son of Well Said. His fifth-place finish in his Governor’s Cup elimination was his ninth start of the season.

“He a good-gaited horse, and he had never seen a mile like the elim before, so he’s gotten better, and we’ll see if he continues to improve,” said Campbell.

Campbell has never won the Governor’s Cup.

“I won the Wilson with Real Artist, but he was not good in the final of the Governor’s Cup,” Campbell recalled.— By Kathy Parker

$413,000 Governor’s Cup 2YOP

Meadowlands, Saturday, Nov. 21, Race 8, Post Time: 9:29 pm

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<tr>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Horse (Sire)</th>
<th>Driver/Trainer</th>
<th>Odds</th>
<th>Breeder/Yearling Price (Sale)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pretty Boy Hill (Somebeachsomewhere)</td>
<td>M. Kakaley/R. Burke</td>
<td>15-1</td>
<td>Tom Hill/Homebred</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Spider Man Hanover (Western Ideal)</td>
<td>A. Miller/B. Brown</td>
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<td>Hanover Shoe Farms/$40,000 (HB)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Show The Fashion (Well Said)</td>
<td>S. Zeron/Ji. Campbell</td>
<td>30-1</td>
<td>Fashion Farms &amp; J. Peres/Homebred</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Big Top Hanover (Western Ideal)</td>
<td>Y. Gingras/R. Burke</td>
<td>5-2</td>
<td>Hanover Shoe Farms/$67,000 (HB)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Katies Rocker (Rocknroll Hanover)</td>
<td>D. Miller/Ji. Campbell</td>
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<td>Fashion Farms/Homebred</td>
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<td>JK Will Power (Somebeachsomewhere)</td>
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<td>White Birch Farm/$110,000 (HB)</td>
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<td>Boston Red Rocks (Rocknroll Hanover)</td>
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<td>Andray Farm/$50,000 (HB)</td>
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<td>Autotune Hanover (Art Major)</td>
<td>Jo. Campbell/M. Harder</td>
<td>10-1</td>
<td>Hanover Shoe Farms/$120,000 (HB)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Check Six (Somebeachsomewhere)</td>
<td>J. Bongiorno/R. Burke</td>
<td>20-1</td>
<td>Vieux Carre Farms/$30,000 (HB)</td>
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NIAGARA
EVENT #61: Three-year-old pacing fillies, non-winners of $50,000 lifetime, as of midnight, October 31, 2015. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine Racetrack.
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
1st Leg: Friday, December 11, 2015 $18,000 G each
2nd Leg: Friday, December 18, 2015 $18,000 G each
Final: Saturday, December 26, 2015 $30,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

BLIZZARD
EVENT #34: Three and Four-year-old pacing fillies & mares in 2016, non-winners of two races or $30,000 lifetime as of midnight, October 31, 2015. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine.
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
First Leg: Thursday, January 7, 2016 $17,000 G each
Second Leg: Thursday, January 14, 2016 $17,000 G each
FINAL: Friday, January 22, 2016 $35,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

MISS VERA BARS
EVENT #36: Three-year-old pacing fillies in 2016, non-winners of three races or $40,000 lifetime as of midnight, October 31, 2015. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine.
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
First Leg: Thursday, February 4, 2016 $17,000 G each
Second Leg: Thursday, February 11, 2016 $17,000 G each
FINAL: Friday, February 19, 2016 $35,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

ONTARIO GIRLS
EVENT #38: Ontario sired Four-year-old pacing mares in 2016, non-winners $60,000 lifetime, as of midnight, October 31, 2015. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine.
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
First Leg: Friday, February 5, 2016 $18,000 G each
Second Leg: Friday, February 12, 2016 $18,000 G each
FINAL: Saturday, February 20, 2016 $40,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

ONTARIO BOYS
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
First Leg: Saturday, February 6, 2016 $18,000 G each
Second Leg: Saturday, February 13, 2016 $18,000 G each
FINAL: Saturday, February 20, 2016 $40,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

WEGZ
EVENT #41: Four-year-old pacing horses & geldings in 2016, non-winners $100,000 lifetime as of midnight, October 31, 2015. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine.
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
First Leg: Saturday, March 5, 2016 $20,000 G each
Second Leg: Saturday, March 12, 2016 $20,000 G each
FINAL: Saturday, March 19, 2016 $50,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

GENERAL BROCK
EVENT #43: Three and Four-year-old trotters in 2016, non-winners of $50,000 lifetime, as of midnight October 31, 2015. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine.
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
First Leg: Monday, February 8, 2016 $18,000 G each
Second Leg: Monday, February 15, 2016 $18,000 G each
FINAL: Monday, February 22, 2016 $40,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

SHERBET.COM
EVENT #40: Four-year-old pacing mares in 2016, non-winners $100,000 lifetime as of midnight, October 31, 2015. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine.
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
First Leg: Friday, March 4, 2016 $20,000 G each
Second Leg: Friday, March 11, 2016 $20,000 G each
FINAL: Saturday, March 19, 2016 $50,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

LIFETIME DREAM
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
First Leg: Monday, January 11, 2016 $20,000 G each
Second Leg: Monday, January 18, 2016 $20,000 G each
FINAL: Monday, January 25, 2016 $40,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

VALEDICTORY
EVENT #62: Three-year-old pacing colts and geldings, non-winners of $50,000 lifetime, as of midnight, October 31, 2015. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine Racetrack.
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
1st Leg: Saturday, December 12, 2015 $18,000 G each
2nd Leg: Saturday, December 19, 2015 $18,000 G each
Final: Saturday, December 26, 2015 $30,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

SNOWSHOE
EVENT #35: Three and Four-year-old pacing colts, horses & geldings in 2016, non-winners of two races or $30,000 lifetime as of midnight, October 31, 2015. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine.
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
First Leg: Friday, January 8, 2016 $17,000 G each
Second Leg: Friday, January 15, 2016 $17,000 G each
FINAL: Friday, January 22, 2016 $35,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

THE COUNT B
EVENT #37: Three-year-old pacing colts & geldings in 2016, non-winners three races or $40,000 lifetime as of midnight, October 31, 2015. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine.
Nomination fee: $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)
First Leg: Friday, February 5, 2016 $17,000 G each
Second Leg: Friday, February 12, 2016 $17,000 G each
FINAL: Friday, February 19, 2016 $35,000 Added
Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet
**Nuncio Wins Again; French Trotting Slightly Disrupted By Terrorist Attacks**

Nuncio, the 4-year-old Andover Hall stallion who captured last year’s Kentucky Futurity and was the runner-up in the Hambletonian, won his 10th race in 13 starts this year last Saturday night at the Solvalla track in Stockholm, Sweden.

Nuncio won the race after just six days off from his victory in the Swedish Breeders Crown on Sunday, Nov. 8. In his latest victory, over 2,140 meters (about 1.3 miles), he was timed in a mile rate of 1:56.1.

Driven by trainer Stefan Melander, Nuncio was sent to the lead and then had to withstand a mid-race challenge by Daley Lovin, driven by Erik Adielsson. Melander couldn’t keep Nuncio trotting straight in the homestretch, which caused him to be fined 4,000 kroner, or about $450. It was the fourth time this season that Melander has been fined when Nuncio has been bearing out while on the lead.

There has been some speculation that Melander might point Nuncio to the Prix d’Amerique, held at the Vincennes track in Paris in late January, but Melander has said that is not his plan at this time.

The American-bred mare Delicious, who set a world record in Sweden earlier this year and races at various distances, also won on the Saturday night Solvalla card. The mare’s trainer, Daniel Reden, has said the Prix d’Amerique is a possibility for the Cantab Hall mare.

Meanwhile, the preps for the Prix d’Amerique begin this Saturday, Nov. 21.

There was a disruption of racing of sorts at the Vincennes track on Monday, Nov. 16, following the terrorist attacks in Paris three days earlier. Thoroughbred racing scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 14 and 15, was canceled, and then when Vincennes was scheduled for a trotting card on Monday, it elected to conduct the card without customers in the grandstand. Only horsemen or others required for racing were allowed on the grounds.

The first of the Prix d’Amerique preps, the Prix de Bretagne, set for Nov. 21, attracted a field of 14, but no Scandinavian horses were entered. Among those named were Prix d’Amerique winner Up And Quick, who would be making his first start after winning the Prix de Paris at the end of February.

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Also in the starting list is last month’s Yonkers International runner-up Timoko, and trainer Richard Westerink has said he does have the Prix d’Amerique on his horse’s 2016 schedule.

“My new challenge with Timoko is to hit Ready Cash’s record in prize money. I think that the first prize in the Prix de Cornulier is more accessible for him than in the Prix d’Amerique,” said Westerink.

The 8-year-old Timoko has earnings of 3,469,993 euros and reaching Ready Cash’s nearly 4.3 million is possible if Timoko has a good winter meet in Paris.

Westerink revealed that he plans for Eric Raffin to warm up Timoko under saddle at Vincennes on Saturday before the Prix de Bretagne, and then if all is well will start him in a “monte” (under saddle) race, the Prix Paul Buquet, on Dec. 3. The big “monte” prize is the Prix de Cornulier on Jan. 24, with a first prize of 315,000 euros.

And in other European trotting news, top French driver Jos. Verbeeck won the Gran Criterium on Nov. 15 at the Milan track in Italy, driving the filly Demonia Roma to victory in the open event for French trainer Philippe Allaire. According to Sweden’s Trav Ronden, Verbeeck is driving in Italy because he isn’t permitted to compete in France because of unpaid taxes.—By Kathy Parker
Waterstone Comes Up Empty
In Tournament Of Champions

It’s still a little strange to go to Red Mile—notice no “The” anymore as the track has dropped it from its moniker—for Thoroughbred simulcasting, but that’s where I found myself for the second time in three weeks last Saturday afternoon. And because I was there a couple of weeks ago for the Breeder’ Cup simulcast from Keeneland, I knew I had to be there early this time to get a prime seat for the year-end Tournament of Champions Handicapping Contest.

I qualified for the tournament for the first time in three years via a fourth-place finish in a wintertime contest. The top 10 finishers in each of the contests that at the time were hosted by Keeneland qualified for the tournament, and this year there were 140 who were eligible. With the Thoroughbred simulcasts now shifted to Red Mile, this was the first-ever contest held at the venerable harness racetrack.

I sat at a comfortable table for the Breeders Cup races and since I wanted a table in front of the TV wall, I arrived at 10:30 a.m., more than two hours before the 12:40 p.m. post at Churchill Downs. The contest was a $2 mythical win/place wager on any nine of the 12 races conducted at Churchill on Saturday. I love the contests because it’s great camaraderie with friends, and I was joined by Les, Jai and Brant, as we all qualified. Although Ed didn’t qualify this year, he came out and joined us as we were each allowed to bring a guest. Last year I was his guest.

Keeneland simulcast/mutuel director Jim Goodman runs a first-class contest, and this tournament was no exception. Jim told me he was ecstatic that 107 of the 140 eligibles turned out, and we enjoyed a terrific buffet lunch that included carved prime rib and fried chicken. Five stars to Chef Joe, and another five stars to the gentleman carving the prime rib who told me he made the chocolate peanut butter pie dessert himself. He said he made 170 pieces and they were all gone before I could grab a second one.

I got a kick out of Red Mile simulcast/mutuel director Julie Sorell coming out—she joined us at our table while enjoying her sumptuous plate of food—and watching her look of fascination were all gone before I could grab a second one.

If you’re looking for a terrific feel-good story that I won the contest—the top two each received a free trip to Las Vegas for the Horseplayer World Series next March and third through 10th received cash—sorry. While I did finish second with my first bet in Race 1 that put me in a massive tie for 10th, and I hung around in the 30s for most of the day with a couple more winners—a $56 winner in Race 10 changed the entire complexion of the contest and left me scrambling in the last two races to find a big-priced winner to climb back up. It didn’t happen, leaving me in 55th place. While 54 finished ahead of me, 52 were behind me.

With just nine races to play you can’t make a mistake, and I made two as I jumped off a pair of horses early for another at the last second, only to see my original pick win—and both at odds of 9-2.

Despite not faring so well, it was a terrific fun-filled day, albeit a long one. I didn’t leave the track until 6:30, which meant I was there for eight hours. And then on the way out I stopped with Jai in the gaming parlor as he wanted to try his luck with the free $10 voucher given to the tournament players.

I saw some in the contest go down between races to play their voucher, but I didn’t see anybody come up with the smile of a big winner. Jai put his 10 bucks in a dollar machine, spun twice at the maximum $5, and in less than 10 seconds we were walking out the door. I’ll be back another time with my voucher as I have a year to use it. And for sure I’ll be back in January when the handicapping contests on Turfway Park, Penn National, Delta Downs and Fairgrounds get underway. And for sure it will again seem strange to be at Red Mile for them.—By Gordon Waterstone

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$489,400 Valley Victory 2YOCT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Post—Horse</th>
<th>Driver/Trainer</th>
<th>Odds</th>
<th>Breeder/Yearling Price (Sale)</th>
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<td>Y. Gingras/J. Takter</td>
<td>7-2</td>
<td>T. Holmes, W. Zent/$200,000 (Lex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2—Taco Tuesday</td>
<td>J. Campbell/F. Antonacci</td>
<td>15-1</td>
<td>J. Wilhite Jr./$52,000 (Lex)</td>
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<td>3—Waitlifter K</td>
<td>T. Tetrick/C. Sylvester</td>
<td>8-1</td>
<td>Winning Key Inc./Homebred</td>
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<tr>
<td>4—Milligan’s School</td>
<td>A. Miller/J. Miller</td>
<td>5-1</td>
<td>R. &amp; J. McColland/$120,000 (HB)</td>
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<td>5—Dog Gone Lucky</td>
<td>C. Callahan/C. Sylvester</td>
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<td>M. Stoltzus, S. Stoltzus/Homebred</td>
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<td>6—Make Or Miss</td>
<td>J. Bongiorno/R. Burke</td>
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<td>J. Wilhite Jr./$85,000 (Lex)</td>
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<td>7—Mikkeli Hanover</td>
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<td>Hanover Shoe Farms/$130,000 (HB)</td>
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<td>8—Marion Marauder</td>
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<td>W. Mulligan/$37,000 (Lex)</td>
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<td>9—Mavens Way</td>
<td>A. Svanstedt</td>
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<td>Deo Volente Farms, TLP Stable/$35,000 (HB)</td>
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<td>10—Treasure Keys</td>
<td>D. Miller/R. Gillock</td>
<td>30-1</td>
<td>R. Key/Homebred</td>
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</table>
Weekend Insights

**GALLIE BY THE BEACH—TVG Mare Pace**

“She’s come around pretty good the last five or six weeks. She’s been racing really good. I was real happy with the way she raced last week. She’s coming into the race in pretty good form. Again, a lot of it is probably going to depend on trip, but hopefully she’ll get a nice trip and get a chance to get a good piece of it.” —trainer Jim Campbell

**PENPAL—Three Diamonds 2YO Filly Pace**

“The bigger track really helped her. We went to Lexington and she raced really well. Then we gave her a start at Chester (Harrah’s Philadelphia) and she got sounder and sounder. We gave her a start last week (Meadowlands) because she was so lightly raced. I think she has a big shot.” —Patrick Lachance about Three Diamonds finalist Penpal, who he both trains, drives and co-owns

**BETTOR BE STEPPIN—Tarport Hap 3YO Filly Pace**

“I think she’ll race better because last time we had the outside and she sat in and paced a little bit to the wire. It was a tough track to try and race from behind.” —trainer Joe Holloway about Bettor Be Steppin, who finished sixth in last week’s Matron at Dover Downs

**ROCK ME GENTLY—Tarport Hap 3YO Filly Pace**

“We bought her for $75,000 at Harrisburg. We had been looking at some others, but they were selling later and we thought they would bring more than we wanted to spend, so we got her. She was off three weeks, and our hope is some of the others are tired. She’s beat most of these fillies at one time or another. I talked to Steve (Elliott, the filly’s previous trainer) and left her exactly the way she was. I qualified her here (at The Meadows) on a windy, terrible day and she was good. She’s going to need the right trip and some luck.” —trainer and co-owner Randy Bendis

**WAITLIFTER K—Valley Victory 2YO Colt Trot**

“He’s had trouble going to the gate. If he gets off on the wrong foot, he gets pacing. He won’t make the gate if he’s on the pace. It’s either over before you start, or he’s going to be competitive. When I saw him come to the gate on the trot (in the elimination) I knew he was leaving. And once he gets to the front he’s a good horse. He was very good last week. I was happy with him.” —trainer Chuck Sylvester

**DIVINE CAROLINE—Tarport Hap 3YO Filly Pace**

“She bore in last time and she hadn’t done that all year. She was three deep in the turn and it’s a tough turn to come three high off. She almost hooked Sassa Hanover’s wheel and that’s what cost her. She trained really good this week and I expect her to be herself.” —trainer Joe Holloway about Divine Caroline, who followed up her Breeders Crown win with a fifth-place finish in the Matron.
Bee A Magician Drive Leads To Suspension; Plans For Trainer’s Reports

In his Stretch Call column on page 4, Dave Briggs looks at what transpired following the TVG race for older trotting mares on Friday night, Nov. 14, at the Meadowlands.

It was announced that Brian Sears would receive a 15-day suspension for his drive behind Bee A Magician, and also that the Meadowlands would require in-advance trainer’s reports of horses scheduled to compete. Then the training report plan was delayed in a subsequent press release.

Sears was given a suspension for what was termed in the New Jersey Commission ruling a “lack of judgment in his driving performance.” Leaving from the outside post 6 with the favorite Bee A Magician, Sears took back to last with the 2013 Horse of the Year and after moving to the outside around the final turn, finished fourth behind Shake It Cerry, who was racing on Lasix for the first time.

In a text to HarnessRacing Weekend Preview on Thursday, Sears said he is not appealing the ruling and he has agreed to take his 15-day suspension in December.

The afternoon following the race, Meadowlands chairman Jeff Gural issued a press release stating he was “flabbergasted by what transpired and believes the betting public needs to be protected.”

The release continued, “Mr. Gural made it clear to Bee A Magician’s trainer Richard ‘Nifty’ Norman that the effort put forth on the racetrack was unacceptable and to Mr. Norman’s credit he understood and agreed that it was a mistake for Brian Sears to drive the horse so conservatively, although because the horse had been tying up he did tell Brian to try not to race her on the front end.

“After consulting with and at the suggestion of several trainers that Mr. Gural spoke with, it has been decided that going forward every trainer will be obligated to give the race office an update on how the horse they are entering has been trained so that information can be provided to our customers, who are the betting public. Without them, we would not exist and they must be protected. The information will be printed in our live program and will be available on our website as well.

“Effective immediately, all trainers that have entered horses to race at the Meadowlands will be required to supply a comment regarding how their horse trained a minimum of 72 hours prior to the race day and that report will be included in the live race program and will be accessible in the “race review” portion of the Meadowlands website. It is expected that all trainers with horses racing on Friday will submit an update on how their horse trained no later than 5 p.m. Tuesday and horses entered for Saturday are required to have their update submitted no later than 5 p.m. Wednesday.”

On Sunday, Nov. 15, the Meadowlands sent out a press release that trainer’s reports would be delayed until track officials met with representatives of the Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey. A subsequent release noted “the purpose of the meeting is to determine the most effective and efficient way of implementing such a program.”

Family Enjoying Ride With Dog Gone Lucky

The family horse keeps making the family proud.

Dog Gone Lucky will try to finish his season with a fifth consecutive win when he faces nine rivals in Saturday's $489,400 Valley Victory Stakes for 2-year-old male trotters at the Meadowlands Racetrack. The colt, who last week won his Valley Victory elimination by one length over Make or Miss, will start the final from post 5 with Corey Callahan driving for trainer Chuck Sylvester.

For the year, Dog Gone Lucky has won six of 13 races and earned $331,493 while finishing off the board only twice. His victories include the Matron Stakes and Kindergarten Classic championship, plus two preliminary divisions of the New York Sires Stakes series.

Dog Gone Lucky is owned by Sylvester's daughter Amy Lynn Stoltzfus and her cousin, Charles Stanisley. The colt was bred by Mike Stoltzfus, who is Amy's husband, and Sam Stoltzfus Jr.

Amy named the horse, a son of former Sylvester star Lucky Chucky out of the Stoltzfus' broodmare Ebbtide Hall, in honor of her late brother Troy Sylvester. Troy, who passed away in 2009, was known by the nickname “Dog.”

“He's our family horse,” Mike Stoltzfus said. “He's kind of special. We didn’t really expect what he’s been doing the last few starts. We thought we had a nice sire stakes horse, but he seems to have jumped up to the next level. He's been pretty impressive. He's beaten some pretty nice horses.”

The Stoltzfus family bought Ebbtide Hall, a daughter of Cash Hall, for $8,000 at the 2011 Standardbred Horse Sale's Mixed Sale. Dog Gone Lucky was Ebbtide Hall's first foal.

“We bought her to breed to Lucky Chucky because we thought it might be a good cross for Lucky Chucky,” Stoltzfus said. “It's worked out all right for us. He's been a pretty good horse all along. He's got good manners, and that means a lot. We've just been enjoying the ride with him.” (HRC)

Sylvain Filion Wins 8,000th Career Race

Sylvain Filion became the newest member of the elite 8,000 win driving club Monday night (Nov. 16) at Woodbine Racetrack. Filion entered the evening just two wins shy of the milestone and wasted little time getting to the winner’s circle.

After winning an Autumn Series final in the second race, Filion recorded the milestone victory in the eighth race behind 11-year-old veteran pacer Val America.

Filion is the 29th driver in North American harness racing history to reach 8,000 wins. The reinsman reached the milestone mark in his 45,014th career drive. Filion is currently in

Continues on page 12
the midst of his best season since 2012 with 299 wins on the campaign. He also leads all Canadian drivers in earnings this season with over $6.2 million (C). The 46-year-old leads all drivers in 2015 on the Woodbine Entertainment circuit with 276 wins and over $5.6 million in earnings. (WEG)

Mark Ford New President Of SBOA-NJ
The Board of Directors of the Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey elected Mark Ford as its president at a reorganization meeting held on Monday (Nov. 16) at the association's offices in Manalapan, N.J.

Ford, one of the leading trainers in Meadowlands history, owns and operates the Mark Ford Training Center. He fills the position held for more than a decade by Thomas Luchento.

“We made tremendous gains while Tom was president,” said Ford. “And we will redouble our efforts to expand racing opportunities in New Jersey, pushing ahead with plans for an expanded gaming referendum in 2016. We thank Tom Luchento for his leadership and know he will continue to contribute as a member of the board of directors.”

In the election of other officers, Mark Mullen was named first vice president, Robert Boni as second vice president, Chris Ryder as third vice president, Alfred Ochsner Jr. as treasurer and Anthony Romano as secretary. (SBOANJ)

Yonkers International Set For Oct. 15, 2016
Yonkers Raceway has announced the 2016 Yonkers International Trot is set for Saturday afternoon, Oct. 15. There are a handful of similarities to the race’s revival, held last month in New York, where he had been hospitalized for the last 10 days. He was 60.

Mr. Hewitt was a fixture on the backstretches of New Jersey training centers and tracks. In addition to having a few horses of his own over the years, he worked for Ross Croghan and most recently Mark Harder. Friends of Mr. Hewitt were planning to celebrate him at the Meadowlands on Saturday night.

Trace Tetrick, Burke Take HoP Titles
Hoosier Park Racing & Casino concluded its 2015 harness racing season with a 14-race card in front of a packed house on Saturday (Nov. 14). Trace Tetrick and Ron Burke secured leading driver and trainer titles, respectively.

Burke, who took home Hoosier Park’s top training honors in 2013 and 2014, was officially recognized as the 2015 leading trainer of the season at Hoosier Park. The Burke barn had 96 trips to the winner’s circle and amassed over $2.1 million in purse earnings throughout the 160-day season. The Trent Stohler Stable finished second in the leading trainer standings with 60 wins.

In the driving ranks, Trace Tetrick, who led the driver standings from start to finish, earned his fourth leading driver title at Hoosier Park. Tetrick scored 323 wins and earned over $3.6 million in purse earnings to secure the title over Tyler Smith, who finished second with 166 victories. Tetrick also earned a spot in Hoosier Park’s record books as he re-established the record for most wins in one season, a record that he established during the 2014 season with 289 victories.

With multiple stakes wins to his credit, Tetrick is on track to record his best season to date in 2015 with over $4.7 million in purse earnings and counting. Tetrick also celebrated his 3,000th career driving win at Hoosier Park this season. (Hoosier)
### Standardbred Poll

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<tr>
<th>Breeder</th>
<th>Starters</th>
<th>Winners</th>
<th>Wins</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
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<td>Perretti Farms</td>
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<td>White Birch Farm</td>
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<td>275</td>
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<td>Frederick Hertrich III</td>
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<td>116</td>
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### Harness Racing Leaders

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

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<td>20</td>
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<td>Artspake (3pc)</td>
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<td>State Treasurer (6ph)</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>865,807</td>
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### Leading Money-Winning Drivers

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<td>$12,459,559 ($205,478)</td>
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<td>David Miller</td>
<td>2,295</td>
<td>348-327-329</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Tetrick</td>
<td>2,390</td>
<td>436-340-316</td>
<td>11,006,245 (385,626)</td>
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<td>Jason Bartlett</td>
<td>2,482</td>
<td>496-446-347</td>
<td>9,521,474 (96,775)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Sears</td>
<td>1,834</td>
<td>351-252-257</td>
<td>8,890,633 (148,373)</td>
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<td>Corey Callahan</td>
<td>2,966</td>
<td>660-441-427</td>
<td>8,794,756 (190,226)</td>
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<td>George Napolitano Jr.</td>
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<td>774-522-359</td>
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<td>George Brennan</td>
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<td>7,241,072 (124,315)</td>
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<td>Brett Miller</td>
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<td>257-298-269</td>
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<td>Daniel Dube</td>
<td>2,219</td>
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### Leading Money-Winning Trainers

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<td>Jimmy Takter</td>
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<td>Rene Allard</td>
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<td>Gilbert Garcia-Herrera</td>
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<td>Julie Miller</td>
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<td>Brian Brown</td>
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