

Harness Racing

Happy New Year

PREVIEW

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2012

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Leading Michigan Trainer Watson Ventures To The Big M

Although trainer Mike Watson won multiple dash and earnings titles over the years at racetracks in his home state of Michigan, the declining industry in the Wolverine State led to his decision last year to move his base of operations to Pennsylvania, where he could be located in close proximity to several racetracks.

Those tracks include the Meadowlands, where Watson will start two horses this weekend, including the 7-year-old trotter

“We lost him and then I took him back for \$20,000. I like Camlucks; they are nice racehorses.”

— Mike Watson on
Go West Lucky Cam

Nordic Venture on Friday night and the 6-year-old pacer Go West Lucky Cam on Saturday night. Both horses are owned by long-time Michigan owners Mel Fink and Cliff Grundy.

Although Watson raced a handful of horses at the Big M last year, this will be the first time he

plans on racing on a regular basis at that track since 1985.

“I left Michigan in 1984 to go to Gaitway Farm in New Jersey, where I raced at Yonkers and Roosevelt, and also some at the Meadowlands,” remembered the 51-year-old Watson, who most recently won the trainers’ dash title at Hazel Park and the dash and earnings title at Northville Downs in 2011.

Since the U.S. Trotting Association began keeping trainer stats in 1991, Watson has won 100 races or more in a single year eight times, including a career-high 134 in 2001 and most recently 123 in 2010. Watson currently has 20 horses in his barn at F&M Farms in Wind Gap, Pa., with another six turned out in the field.

Nordic Venture will get Watson’s new Big M venture started in the opening race on Friday’s opening night card.

“We bought him privately (in October) in a package deal (with two-time Michigan Sires Stakes champion Lucky Roll);” said Watson of the son of Keystone Nordic out of the Joie De Vie mare Allegheny Moon. “I raced Allegheny

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Moon, who was pretty damn good. She set the track record at Northville as a 3 year old but she also broke her knee at three so she didn’t get to race long.”

With slightly more than \$300,000 in career earnings at the time of the purchase, Nordic Venture has added only modestly to that total in seven starts for his new connections. Although he has missed a check just once, none of the others were win paydays. Nordic Venture’s work will be cut out for him on Friday as he starts from post 10 with Matt Kakaley driving.

Watson claimed Go West Lucky Cam for \$15,000 on Aug. 17 at Harrah’s Philadelphia for Michigan-based owner Phil Schultz. The horse was claimed away for \$15,000 in his next start at Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs, but then Watson—this time for Fink and Grundy—reclaimed the son of Camluck for \$20,000 the following week.

“Phil called me and wanted to claim some horses,” Watson explained. “Then he wanted to put this horse back in for \$15,000, but I liked the horse. I told him we would probably lose him when we took him to Pocono. We lost him and then I took him back for \$20,000. He’s made money right along. I like Camlucks; they are nice racehorses.”

Go West Lucky Cam, who has career earnings of more than \$215,000, will start from post four with David Miller driving. With his most recent win coming Dec. 8 at Yonkers, Go West Lucky Cam was classified B-1 by the Meadowlands’ race secretary Peter Koch, who is using classified racing for the first time. Nordic Venture was placed in a B-2 contest.

“I know how the system is rated so I had an idea where he (Koch) would put them,” said Watson. “I figured they’d be in the Bs somewhere.” — *By Gordon Waterstone*



Tom Tanner Photo

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Mr. Dennis A Maturing 3YO

Among the horses classified as "B-1" by Meadowlands race secretary Peter Koch is Mr. Dennis, a 3-year-old pacer who has been improving with virtually every start. He'll be making his very first start at the Meadowlands on Saturday night in race eight and comes into the race off of a lifetime-best 1:51.1 victory at Harrah's Philadelphia.

Mr. Dennis has the pedigree to be a top performer. He is a son of Dragon Again and Lisheen, thus he is a half brother to

"Mr. Dennis has just been an immature colt. He was sore in his knees and we had to wait on him."

- Erv Miller

\$2.1 million winner Lis Mara p,4, 1:47.3, as well as other notably fast siblings, among them Lisjune p,4, 1:50.4, Lis Deo p,2, 1:50.2 and Lisagain p,4, 1:49.1f.

Erv Miller trains Mr. Dennis and he also trained Lis Mara, Lisjune, Lis Deo and Lisagain. With the exception of Lis Deo, Miller agreed that Lisheen's foals seem to do better as 4 year olds than at ages two and three.

"Mr. Dennis has just been an immature colt," said Miller. "He was sore in his knees and we had to wait on him. He's gone some pretty good trips in the last few starts."

Although Mr. Dennis took his lifetime mark on Dec. 16 at Harrah's Philadelphia, Miller noted a Nov. 16 victory at Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs is also indicative of the horse's progress. "He was first-over in that race (winning in 1:51.4)," he added.

Bred by Tim Rooney, Mr. Dennis was a \$65,000 yearling purchase by Mystical Marker Farm, Ken Duffy and Mary Jane Anderson back in the fall of 2010 and thus far has earned \$47,120 in 18 starts. He was named Mr. Dennis at the insistence of Mike Anderson's sons. "They always call Dennis Lakomy (of Mystical Marker) Mr. Dennis, so that's how this horse got his name," explained Miller.

Mr. Dennis is one of 40 horses based at Miller's training complex in Pennsylvania, about an hour-and-15-minute drive to the Meadowlands. He also has another 76 young horses at Southern Oaks Training Center in Florida.

"I've been going back and forth," said Miller via phone from Arthur, Ill., where his family spent the Christmas holiday, "but once we get going with the babies I won't do much traveling from Florida." — By Kathy Parker

WEEKEND FEATURED RACES

Friday, December 28

All times listed are local.

8:55p M6 **A-2**Trot [Trackmaster PPs](#)
 9:35p M8 **A-2**Trot [Trackmaster PPs](#)
 10:05p Wdb9 **3YO Filly** Pace [Trackmaster PPs](#)

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

Saturday, December 29

8:55p M6 **A-1** Pace [Trackmaster PPs](#)
 9:58p BlmP9 **Invitational** Pace [Trackmaster PPs](#)
 10:05p Wdb9 **Preferred** Pace [Trackmaster PPs](#)

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



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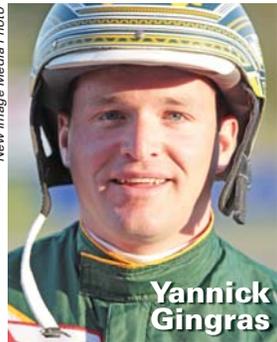
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Gingras Set To Defend Big M Title

Following a season of career firsts, Yannick Gingras is anxious to defend his Meadowlands driving title when live racing returns opening weekend, Friday, Dec. 28, and Saturday, Dec. 29. Post time is 7:15 p.m.

Gingras has firmly established himself as one of harness racing's rising stars, and at age 33, the Quebec-born driver continues to soar at a record pace. In 2012, the "Green Hornet" earned more than \$13 million in purses for the first time, ranking him second in the nation.



New Image Media Photo

Gingras also won his first Meadowlands Pace with A Rocknroll Dance and earned his first Big M driving title by edging Tim Tetrick in wins 125-123. He passed 4,000 career wins, winning over 400 races for the fifth time in six years, and also hit the \$85 million mark in career earnings.

"2012 was absolutely a dream year for me," said Gingras. "I thought going in I could have a good year with the stock I had coming back, and it actually went beyond expectations."

Gingras had A Rocknroll Dance in high gear in the \$600,000 Meadowlands Pace, and the Rocknroll Hanover-sired colt went down the road from the rail in 1:48.1 en route to a million-dollar season.

"I thought A Rocknroll Dance had a big chance to win the Meadowlands Pace, and he got the job done that night, and really all year long," noted Gingras.

He also won the Pace consolation with Hurrikane Kingcole in a sizzling 1:47.4.

During the 2012 meet Gingras' fast start and strong finish earned him leading driver status at the Big M for the first time. "The Meadowlands driving title has always been a dream of mine," he admitted. "It was kind of surreal to get that done because it was really my first driving title anywhere. When I came to the Meadowlands in 2004 I was still young and was just starting to dominate at Yonkers."

Gingras capped off 2012 with a natural hat trick in the Breeders Crown at Woodbine with Dan Patch Award winner To Dream On, Maven and Rockin Amadeus. He also finished second with Drop The Ball and Little Brown Fox.

"Fortunately, pretty much all the horses I drove in 2012 are coming back," he noted. The only one I'm not sure of is Little Brown Fox. Horses like Foiled Again, Drop The Ball, To Dream On and Rockin Amadeus certainly give me something to look forward to in 2013."

Gingras and Foiled Again continued to wreak havoc in the free-for-all ranks. The 2011 Pacer of the Year roared back at age eight with another million dollar campaign and was voted the sport's top older pacer for the second straight year. The son of Dragon Again also became the richest pacer of all time at \$4.6 million with a dramatic upset in the \$794,870 Canadian Pacing Derby in 1:48.3 at Mohawk, the biggest career win for horse and driver.

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"What amazed me about Foiled Again is he wasn't quite as sharp going into that race as he was at other points in his career," recalled Gingras. "It was the first time he had a chance to go for the money record, plus he did it from a spot where he usually doesn't win. He closed from eighth and was zig-zagging between horses. It just defined his career. He's an overachiever and an unbelievable horse, and on that stage he gave me my biggest win ever. It was a great thrill and I'm so proud of that horse. He's not the fastest nor the biggest horse out there, but he's got a huge heart and makes money. If he stays healthy the \$5 million mark is well within his reach."

It's all about horse power, and Gingras will continue to have plenty of it as the go-to guy for Ron Burke, the Big M's leading trainer in 2012.

"Ron Burke is a great person to drive for," said Gingras. "He's not going to call you to give you a hard time when you mess up. I feel I'm definitely still improving as a driver. I was on top of my game this past year and I'm really confident in myself. He sees that and I think we're a great team. He likes the way I race his horses. He wants somebody who gives his horses the best chance to win."

Gingras will be part of a driver autograph session on the Paddock Level on Saturday, Dec. 29, from 6 to 6:30 p.m. when the Meadowlands offers a 2013 calendar giveaway. He will also be an InThe Sulky guest on the track's pre-card broadcast. (*Meadowlands*)

Plenty Of Horses Makes Draws As Easy As A-B-C

A new meet at the Meadowlands gets underway Friday night, Dec. 28, with a 12-race card, and another one set for Saturday night. Both cards have full fields, which established the Meadowlands as the most popular betting product in harness racing.

This year's program has a new look because of the implementation of the "ABC" classification system. With the exception of claiming races, free-for-alls, opens or preferreds, and a few other cases, Meadowlands race secretary Peter Koch classifies all horses with an A, B or C classification, with As being the top conditioned class.

So how did the new classification system work for the opening draws?

"Most of the trainers racing today have never dealt with this before either," noted Koch, "so I think that they have a wait-and-see attitude. But when you have plenty of horses, it is obviously easier to make things work."

Koch said he had approximately 250 horses in the box for Friday's card and about 175 for Saturday's races.

Trainer Ron Burke, the sport's leading trainer in 2012, is known for having a keen eye when it comes to classifying and entering his horses. He has six horses racing Friday and nine in-to-go on Saturday.

"Ronnie called me up and gave me a bunch of horses and told me to just put letters on them and put them in," said Koch. "But he was disappointed that we couldn't come up with an open pace or an open mare pace."

Koch said there was quite a bit of work to prepare for the draws for the opening cards because of the large number of horses that had to be classified. "We'll be classifying horses as we go along, so once horses are in the system it will get more efficient," he added. — *By Kathy Parker*

Price Is Right That Recking Ball Is A "Special Horse"

Lining up in post five in the second race at Maywood Park on Friday night will be Recking Ball, who will making the 297th and final start of his career due to the U.S. Trotting Association's rules for mandatory retirement at the age of 14. Friday night's card at Maywood starts at 7:10 p.m. (Central), with the second race scheduled for 20 minutes later.

Although Recking Ball is listed as the 3-1 morning-line favorite in Friday's race—a \$3,200 event for \$4,000 claimers—the son of Beach Towel has gone off the bettors' choice just thrice in his entire career—on Nov. 14, 2002, when he was involved in an accident at Prairie Meadows and did not finish the race, on Nov. 30, 2006, when he finished fifth at Maywood Park, and on Oct. 13, 2007, when he scored a rare victory at Raceway Park.

In fact, Recking Ball seldom left the gate over his career at anything less than double-digit odds, which reflects his



record of just nine wins with earnings of \$65,207 for Duncan Price's Sportsmedia Stable of Grant Park, Ill.

The role of favorite on Friday is a result of his ninth win coming in his prior start on Dec. 13 at Maywood Park, Recking Ball's first trip to the winner's circle in 114 starts dating back to Aug. 8, 2008, also at Maywood.

"We never raced him in claimers prior to this year so he was probably in over his head a lot," explained Price, who also does the training. "Prior to this we always raced him in conditioned races. He was my daughter Laurie's project—she raised him and loved the horse—and she wasn't thinking about putting him in a claimer. In the 14 years he never went to bed without an apple, carrots and treats in his dinner—ever!"

Bred by Castleton Farm, Recking Ball is out of the Albattross mare Keystone Maurine, who Price purchased in 1998 in foal to Beach Towel (which resulted in Recking Ball). Price was familiar with the mare, having raced a son of No Nukes named Recognized through a 371-start campaign in the 1990s for owner Stephen Swindal, the ex-son-in-law of the late New York Yankees' owner George Steinbrenner.

"Recking Ball was foaled at my house," said Price, who owned Galewood Farm in Illinois until its closing about 15 years ago.

It took Recking Ball 41 starts over his first three years of racing before he earned his first victory, that coming Sept. 28, 2004, in a fair race at Sandwich, Ill. His wins were spaced out generously over his career, with his biggest output coming in 2007 when he was a three-time winner, including a career-best 1:55.2h effort at Maywood.

Recking Ball made just 11 starts in 2011 before being sidelined due to injury. He did not return to the races until late this past September.

"He had some minor injuries," explained Price, who now trains a stable of eight at Balmoral Park. "We tried to bring him back in the summertime; it was too hot for him and he couldn't breathe and just couldn't deal with it."

As for the lack of seldom having to purchase a win photo, Price said he was "never frustrated."

"We loved him every time he went to post," he said. "He's just a horse but to us he was a big deal and special horse."



Dewey To Stand At Morrisville

Deweycheatumnhowe 3,1:50.4 (\$3,155,178) will stand at Morrisville College in Morrisville, NY, beginning in 2013. The announcement was made by Alan J. Leavitt, president of Walnut Hall Ltd., the Deweycheatumnhowe syndicate manager.

The only undefeated Hambletonian winner in the history of harness racing, Deweycheatumnhowe's first crop raced at two in 2012. He had the winners of just under a million dollars, with numerous stakes winners. However, Leavitt stated that he had every confidence Deweycheatumnhowe would emulate two of Leavitt's earlier great sires, Speedy Crown and Speedy Somolli, both of whom established themselves as great sires from their second crop of 2 year olds. Deweycheatumnhowe's second crop will race at two in 2013. Leavitt added that Walnut Hall Ltd. will be breeding 20 of their high powered trotting mares in 2013.

Deweycheatumnhowe's 2013 fee will be \$10,000, live foal, and inquiries should be addressed to Steve Katz, at Walnut Hall Ltd., phone (859) 254-2776, email steve@walnuthall.com.

In other stud news from Walnut Hall Ltd., the farm announced that Windsong Espoir, 2,1:55.3 (\$763,230), winner of the O'Brien Award as Canada's top 2-Year-Old Trotting Colt in 2007, will stand the 2013 breeding season at Seelster Farms in Lucan, Ont. The announcement was made by Leavitt, manager of the Windsong Espoir Syndicate.

By leading sire Kadabra, out of Diamond Image by Balanced Image. Windsong Espoir's first crop of 2 year olds will race at two in 2013. His stud fee will remain at \$3,500 (C), live foal, and inquiries should be directed to Katz, at Walnut Hall Ltd., phone (859) 254-2776, email steve@walnuthall.com (*Walnut Hall Ltd.*)

Archangel To Stand At Blue Chip

Blue Chip Farms in New York is welcoming world champion Archangel to its stallion ranks in 2013. His fee will be \$4,000.

A winner of \$906,579, Archangel won the 2012 Yonkers Trot in 1:54.1h, a world record time, without trotting hobbles. He defeated heavily favored Googoo Gaagaa and Market Share.

Trained by Peter Arigena, Archangel won an elimination and final of the Empire Breeders Classic, setting a stakes record of 1:53.1 in the final, eclipsing the track mark set by Deweycheatumnhowe.

A son of Credit Winner, Archangel is the first foal of the multiple stakes winner Michelle's Angel 3, 1:54 (\$436,921), a daughter of Andover Hall. (*Blue Chip Farms*)

Big M Patrons Can Win

One Percent Of "The Captain"

One lucky harness racing fan will experience the thrill of owning a champion racehorse via a unique promotion at the Meadowlands where the Grand Prize is a one-per-

cent share of all future purse earnings by the sensational Captaintreacherous.

Syndicate manager Myron Bell proposed the idea to Jeff Gural when the colt was offered for syndication last fall. A deal was struck to make the concept a reality and the Meadowlands has purchased a share of Captaintreacherous for use in this exciting promotion.

As the star of the phenomenal first crop of super-sire Somebeachsomewhere, Captaintreacherous had a fantastic season in 2012. "The Captain" won the marquee 2-year-old events at both the Meadowlands (Woodrow Wilson) and Mohawk Racetrack (Metro) while compiling four wins of 1:50 or faster, the first freshman in racing history to accomplish that feat.

At year's end, Captaintreacherous had won eight of 10 starts and earned \$918,253. With the recent announcement of the 2012 seasonal awards, he became the first freshman in 25 years to be honored as "Pacer of the Year."

Captaintreacherous is currently being prepared for his 3-year-old campaign by trainer Tony Alagna and will be reunited with driver Tim Tetrick when he returns to the races next season.

You may enter for your chance to win with paid admission every Saturday night (starting this Saturday, Dec. 29). Entry forms will be available at the admission gates and should be deposited in the designated containers located in the Clubhouse lobby and at the Paddock Level promotions table.

Twenty randomly selected names will be entered into the Grand Prize drawing to be held after Race 10 on May 4. The drawing will be done in reverse order; with the first 17 drawn receiving a \$100 betting voucher, the 18th name drawn receives a \$150 voucher and the runner-up will be awarded a \$250 voucher. The 20th and final name drawn will receive the 1 percent share of Captaintreacherous's future purse earnings.

The Grand Prize is one percent of all purses earned by Captaintreacherous during his racing career and ends when he retires from racing. The contest winner shall be responsible for none of the expenses incurred during the length of the promotion. (*Meadowlands*)

Deal Closed For Sale Of Lebanon

On Friday, Dec. 21, Miami Valley Gaming & Racing, a joint venture of Delaware North Companies Gaming & Entertainment and Churchill Downs Incorporated (CDI), completed its purchase of the harness racing licenses and certain assets held by Lebanon Trotting Club Inc. and Miami Valley Trotting Inc.

The closing on the purchase and recent state and local approvals pave the way for construction to begin on a new gaming and racing facility located near exit 29 off of Interstate 75 between Cincinnati and Dayton. The new facility is expected to open in the first quarter of 2014.

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"We are pleased to be moving forward with this significant economic development project that is expected to add \$24 million a year to the local economy and create 1,000 construction jobs and 700 permanent jobs in southwestern Ohio," William Bissett, president of Delaware North Companies Gaming & Entertainment, said.

Bill Carstanjen, CDI's president and chief operating officer, added, "We appreciate the hard work of everyone involved, including the Ohio State Racing Commission and the Ohio Lottery Commission, to complete the necessary steps for us to build this new, world-class gaming and racing facility that we expect will be another great entertainment destination in Ohio."

When construction of the new venue is completed, harness racing and simulcast operations will move from the current location at the Warren County Fairgrounds to the new gaming and racing complex on the northeast corner of Union Road and State Route 63 in Turtle Creek Township in Warren County.

The joint venture finalized the acquisition of this land with the Ohio Department of Administrative Services on Dec. 20, 2012. The new facility will include a five-eighths mile harness racing track and a 186,000 square-foot gaming facility, featuring up to 2,500 video lottery terminals (VLTs), on the 120-acre site. The Warren County Board of Commissioners approved the planned use development for the new facility in October.

Miami Valley Gaming & Racing will invest approximately \$215 million, including the \$50 million license fee payable to the Ohio Lottery Commission. The purchase was contingent upon the approval of the partnership's respective applications to the Ohio Lottery Commission and the Ohio State Racing Commission. The Ohio State Racing Commission approved the joint venture's racing license and application to relocate the Raceway on Dec. 13, 2012. The Ohio Lottery Commission conditionally approved Miami Valley Gaming & Racing's application for its video lottery sales agent license on Dec. 19, 2012.

At the December meeting of the Ohio State Racing Commission, chairman Robert K. Schmitz announced the date, time and place of the commission's next monthly meeting: It will be held on Jan. 10, 2013, at 10 a.m. in Room 1960 of the Riffe Center located at 77 S. High St. in Columbus.

A hearing on the proposed facilities at the new Lebanon Raceway will take place during the meeting. Facilities can mean grandstand seating, accommodations for horsemen and horses, the racing surface or almost anything else related to any amenity. "Everyone will have an opportunity to appear before the commission and express opinions," Schmitz said after the commission approved two resolutions related to the Lebanon Raceway relocation.

Racing and simulcasting will continue at the Warren County Fairgrounds facility until construction of the new facility is complete.

Record \$70,192 Payoff At Balmoral

With a carryover of just over \$10,000 and more than \$80,000 in "new money" put through the betting windows, Wednesday night's 50 cent Pick 5 wager at Balmoral Park gave gamblers a great chance to share in the Holiday cheer. And it did just that for one lucky gambler who toted home a Balmoral Park record payoff of \$70,192.20 as the lone winner of the wager.

Things started as expected as 8-5 second choice Kitty O'Brien (Pat Curtin) captured the first leg of the Pick 5 which entails races two through six each night. The toteboard lit up like a Christmas tree in leg two though as 32-1 outsider Flirtin With Danger (Lamar Wingard) pulled off a shocking upset from post position 10. That was followed up by another upset as Brilliant Chief (Casey Leonard) parlayed a perfect two-hole trip into a victory at 19-1 in the third leg of the wager. Chalk players were rewarded in the fourth leg of the bet as 6-5 favorite Full Steam Ahead (Kyle Wilfong) made every call a winning one.

The last leg of the wager saw Fox Valley Arrow (Casey Leonard) turn a ground-saving journey into a victory at odds of 9-2.

The winning numbers of 2-10-1-(5-9)-1 resulted in a final payout of \$70,192.20, easily eclipsing the previous record of \$44,675.10 which had been set in February of 2012. There was no word as of release time as to where the winning ticket was purchased.

Spurred on by the big Pick 5 pool and a craving for harness action after a two-day hiatus horseplayers wagered \$1,197,484 on the special 12-race program on Wednesday night at Balmoral. Wednesday's Pick 4 at Balmoral Park also brought a handsome return as the \$1 wager returned a hefty \$24,977.30 on the combination of 1-3-7-2. (*Balmoral Park*)

New Handicapping Tourney Announced

In conjunction with HorseTournaments.com and the \$100,000 World Harness Handicapping Championship (WHHC), which will be held at the Meadowlands on Saturday, April 13, 2013, the United States Trotting Association (USTA) announced on Friday (Dec. 21) that it has created a free, on-line, qualifying series of 10 tournaments to be conducted during January and February. The winner of each qualifier gains a berth (\$1,000 value) into the WHHC final at the Meadowlands.

The USTA World Handicapping Championship Online Qualifying Series, which will commence on Friday, Jan. 18, will be conducted on Friday and Saturday nights for five consecutive weekends and will feature 10 different USTA member tracks.

Contestants can register free at <http://www.horsetournaments.com/> but will be required to enter each week starting on Monday at 9 a.m. (Eastern) to participate in the upcoming

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ing weekend's contests. Entries will be limited to 1,000 for each contest on a first-come-first-serve basis.

Free past performances will be provided for each contest by TrackMaster.

The contest format will be selecting one horse and an alternate, in case of a late scratch, for a \$2 Win-Place wager on each race at the featured track that evening with all selections needing to be submitted prior to post time of the first race. A complete listing of rules and regulations is available at <http://www.horsetourneys.com/>.

Following is a schedule with featured racetracks for the USTA Online WHHC Qualifying Series:

Date	Track
Fri. Jan. 18	Meadowlands
Sat. Jan. 19	Balmoral Park
Fri. Jan. 25	Maywood Park
Sat. Jan. 26	Cal Expo
Fri. Feb. 1	The Meadows
Sat. Feb. 2	Yonkers Raceway
Fri. Feb. 8	Northfield Park
Sat. Feb. 9	Pompano Park
Fri. Feb. 15	Northville Downs
Sat. Feb. 16	Buffalo Raceway

The 2013 World Harness Handicapping Championship, which will bring together horseplayers from across North America to compete for \$100,000 in prize money, marks a new partnership between the Meadowlands and the USTA formed to create the industry's ultimate tournament experience.

Standardbred Canada will support the project by facilitating the participation of Canadian racing and wagering outlets.

Limited to just 100 spots, the WHHC will be held as a one-day tournament, with a welcome reception and warm-up event the evening prior. Players may earn a seat in the WHHC through a qualifying event or through direct buy-in (\$1000) should enough spots remain as of April 1, 2013.

HorseTourney.com is an online handicapping tournament website that is owned and operated by Ellis Park Race Course in Henderson, Ky. HorseTourney.com offers handicappers the opportunity to qualify to horse racing's major handicapping contest programs, including the Daily Racing Form/NTRA National Handicapping Championship, Horse Player World Series, World Harness Handicapping Championship, The BIG One at Ellis Park and several other major handicapping tournaments at racetracks and casinos around the country. (USTA)

Walnridge Farm NJ Breeder of Year

Walnridge Farm of Cream Ridge, NJ, one of the state's oldest farms, is the 2012 New Jersey Standardbred Breeder of the Year. The Breeders Committee of the Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey has selected the Meirs family's Walnridge Farm to be among the hon-

orees at the 56th Annual New Jersey Breeders Awards Luncheon at 1 p.m. on Jan. 27, 2013 at Charley's Other Brother in Eastampton Township, NJ.

"My grandfather [David Meirs], who was born in 1879, had a farm and loved standardbreds," said Dr. Richard S. Meirs, 56, general manager of Walnridge Farm Inc. and director of the Walnridge Equine Clinic PC. "When Route 537 was a dirt road, he'd travel up it to watch the races at Freehold. After the first day of pari-mutuel gambling [in 1941] he never went back.

"He was a Quaker purist," Meirs noted. "People would race for cigars and just for fun on farm tracks. It was the sport of that time.

"My father (David Meirs II, VMD), Steve Dey, Charlie Smith and Anthony Abbatiello were fundamental in starting the New Jersey Sire Stakes program and the construction of the Meadowlands Racetrack," he added. "It was early in the 1970s when open space was important and the state was encouraging the preservation of green pastures. Our first stallion was Peerswick, a horse from New Zealand. We paid \$1,000 for him in 1973. We still have his stall plaque. He was the first horse to pace in two minutes in New Jersey."

The Walns, the origins of the Walnridge name, were English Quakers who arrived in Philadelphia in 1682, according to farm history. Their farm in Upper Freehold Township, now part of the Monmouth County Park System, was acquired in 1774. In 1830, Nicholas Waln purchased the property near Hornerstown for his son Richard, and this became Walnridge Farm.

The merger of the Waln and Meirs families took place in 1861 when Elizabeth Waln married John Meirs and Walnridge became their farm.

Dr. David A. Meirs II inherited the farm in 1952 while he was a student at the Veterinary School of the University of Pennsylvania. It was in 1965 that Dr. Meirs established the Walnridge Equine Clinic.

"Niatross, Beach Towel and Direct Scooter were three superstar stallions that came through here," Rich Meirs explained. "Direct Scooter was near and dear to my father's heart. He was such a vivid outcross. It was so radical that no one expected him to be profitable and productive. But the family has been extremely good, especially his son, Matt's Scooter; his grandson, Mach Three and his great-grandson, Somebeachsomewhere.

"We currently have 25 broodmares in the family or farm-owned, and all 350 acres are farmland preserved," he said.

Dancinwiththstarzzz, He's Gorgeous, Federal Flex and Hes A Demon are among those foals recently born and raised at Walnridge.

Dr. David Meirs II, 83, retired from veterinary practice but is still involved with farm activities and "keeps an eye on me," noted his son. "My father is my biggest advocate and supporter."

In 1982, Richard Meirs earned his VMD at the University of Pennsylvania and returned to the family clinic. He and his

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wife, Sherri, have three children. Hailey, nearly 21, is a special education major at Coastal Carolina University; Casey, 27, has her own broodmare, and Cory, 24, is in his final pre-vet year at the University of Vermont.

"This farm will stay in our family," said Rich Meirs. "We are dedicated to New Jersey and hope to keep good things happening here."

For tickets to the awards luncheon (\$35 per person), contact the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Markets & Development, Horse Industry, PO Box 330, Trenton, N.J. 08625 or call at (609) 984-4389. Reservations must be made before Jan. 17. (*Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey*)

Hall of Famer Walter Russell Dies

Hall of Famer Walter Russell, a son of a Hall of Fame horseman who chose to make his mark in harness racing in the judges' stand instead of on the track, died Saturday morning, Dec. 22, at the age of 86 at Emory University Hospice in Atlanta. Mr. Russell, who lived in suburban Atlanta for many years but frequently visited his hometown of Stevenson, Ala., suffered a massive heart attack on Saturday, Dec. 15.

Mr. Russell's early experience as a racing official began when he was hired as assistant starter to Stephen Phillips, inventor of the mobile starting gate. In the years that followed he served in the stand as presiding judge at the Meadowlands, the Grand Circuit meet at The Red Mile, The Meadows, Brandywine Raceway, Pompano Park, Laurel Park, Freestate Raceway, Hazel Park, Louisville Downs, Hinsdale Raceway, Bay State Raceway (Foxboro), and Ocean Downs. He was respected for his integrity and professionalism in the stand, and also his no-nonsense approach to reprimanding horsemen.

"I once thought that if I had much title to excellence in this sport, it would have been as a groom," said Mr. Russell in 2011, when he was inducted into the Harness Racing Hall of Fame. "I thought I trained a horse decently, and I certainly rode some miles with good horses of friends of mine, John Patterson and Billy Haughton."

Mr. Russell was the son of Hall of Famer Sanders Russell and he began working with horses at a young age on the family farm in Stevenson. He traveled with his parents to race meets all over, especially the Grand Circuit stops. One of Mr. Russell's brightest memories was jogging a promising filly who had been hitched only once before. That horse was Fresh Yankee, the 1970 Horse of the Year. He also helped his father with AC's Viking, the 1962 Hambletonian winner.

Instead, the judges stand was where Mr. Russell crafted a career, thanks in part to the respected racing administrator Walter Gibbons, who put him on that path. "I had done just about everything else at Foxboro, so he thought I might be qualified to be a judge," recalled Mr. Russell in a 1975 interview.

Mr. Russell was in the judges' stand for two famous dead heats. The first was the dead-heat finish between Strike Out and Jay Time in the 1972 Adios. Then in 1987 Mr. Russell was the presiding judge at The Red Mile when Jaguar Spur and Laag finished in a dead heat in the Tattersalls Pace.

Due to his background training horses, Mr. Russell became known as a judge who was knowledgeable but also had no tolerance for nonsense on the track. He set high standards in the judges' stand and mentored those he worked with in the stand.

"Everybody was in awe of what an extraordinary racing official Walter was, but I think what I and many others will remember most was his counsel, intellect, friendship and of course, his wit," remembered Hambletonian Society president and CEO Tom Charters, one of Mr. Russell's closest friends. "He was a man who loved the sport for the past 80 years and is someone who is irreplaceable.

"He had the respect of horsemen universally," Charters added. "He was also beloved by his peers in the judges' stand. I remember one racing official who once told me that harness racing with Walter was just fun!"

Mr. Russell was also keenly interested in learning and obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Alabama, a Master of Arts in music from Peabody College, a master's degree in music from Vanderbilt University, and a doctorate degree in humanities from Emory University. He taught classes at the university level at four schools, where he seized the opportunity to introduce many a student to harness racing. While a state steward for the Maryland Racing Commission, Mr. Russell taught English courses at American University in Washington, D.C.

He also attended the famed Juilliard School for music in New York City and was an accomplished pianist. One year, while attending the Hambletonian, he entertained trotting fans by playing the baby grand piano in the lobby of the Sheraton Meadowlands hotel. He did the same thing at Adios Week parties. — *harnessracing.com*

Tetrick, Toscano Earn Honors

Tim Tetrick was the regular driver behind the top five horses in harness racing's year-end Top 10 performers. He drove Chapter Seven, the Horse of the Year (also Trotter of the Year), conditioned by Trainer of the Year Linda Toscano, and Captaintreacherous, the Pacer of the Year; in fact he drove the top three finishers in the Trotter of the Year contest voting, and the 1-3 vote-getters on the pacing side. Seven of the 12 divisional award winners gained from his sulky savvy.

Tetrick was an easy 97-33 winner for Driver of the Year honors over Dave Palone in balloting conducted by the U.S. Harness Writers Association. With this nod, Tetrick becomes the first driver to ever earn the accolade three times.

Continues on page 9 >>>>



Tetrick is the leading money-winning driver in North America for the sixth straight year, at \$18.46 million. He handled four winners on the Breeders Crown championship card.

Linda Toscano, the trainer of the Harness Horse of the Year (Chapter Seven), the richest Standardbred racehorse of 2012 (Market Share at just over \$2 million), and the champion of the sport's glamour division (3-year-old pacing colt Heston Blue Chip), capped her extraordinary season by being the overwhelming choice of the U.S. Harness Writers Association voters as Glen Garnsey Trainer of the Year. She was named on 122 of 130 votes cast by the writers for the biggest victory margin in human balloting this year.

Toscano is no stranger to handling top horses during her career, but the Freehold, N.J., resident put it all together this year with her overwhelming stable of talent. Horses trained by the 57-year-old Toscano won a career-best \$6.71 million while she guided a stable that was home to many of the sport's top stars.

Tetrick and Toscano will be honored on Sunday, March 3, at the Dan Patch Awards Banquet, the climatic event of Harness Congress VI weekend, to be held at the Westin Beach Resort and Spa in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Further information about the banquet, the Congress, and related events is available at <http://www.ushwa.org/>. (HRC/USHWA)

Wisconsin Horsewoman Carol Yohn Dies

Carol E. Yohn, 65, wife of U.S. Trotting Association director Robert Yohn, died on Friday, Dec. 21. She was a longtime member of the Wisconsin Harness Horse Association, a breeder and owner of Standardbreds, and a licensed trainer.

Gabe Wand, a prominent Wisconsin harness horseman and USTA said, "Carol was a long time WHHA member, friend, horsewoman and harness racing fan. Her passion was unmatched during her time here and she will be deeply missed."

In addition to her husband, Mrs. Yohn is survived by two daughters, Becca and Rachel.

Thomson One Of Maryland's Top Leaders

The World Trade Center Institute Awards' Review Committee has selected Joe Thomson, owner of Winbak Farm, to be one of six awarded with Maryland's 17th annual International Leadership Award on March 6.

The committee remarked on Winbak Farm's accomplishments and strong growth record as being reasons why the farm is a model for other Maryland firms on the global horizon.

Select committee members interviewed Thomson at his Winbak Farm of Maryland, where they also learned about the operations and enjoyed a tour of the farm's divisions.

Of Maryland's 150,000 firms, Winbak Farm and six other firms stood out as Maryland's exemplary International Leadership Award winners for 2013. These include: Miltec UV—Robert Blandford—President Canam Steel Corporation; Mary Gordon—President & Corporate Controller, Johns Hop-

kins Medicine International; Steve Thompson, President, Premier Rides Inc.; Jim Seay, President & Founder Earth Networks; Robert Marshall, President & CEO Chrysler Group LLC; and John Griffin, International Port Operations

Joe Thomson will be honored at Maryland's 17th annual International Business Leadership Awards ceremony. The ceremony will take place from 5-8:30 p.m. at The Jim Rouse Visionary Center in Baltimore on March 6. The event will host nearly 400 of the area's top business leaders, including the Governor of Maryland. (Winbak Farm)

Tattler's Jet Featured In NY Times

The lead story on the front page of the Wednesday (Dec. 26) edition of The New York Times sports section, placed by Harness Racing Communications, is about 14-year-old pacer Tattler's Jet, who is making his final career start in the Au Revoir at Monticello on Thursday afternoon (Dec. 27).

The story appears across the entire width of the front sports page, with a photo of Tattler's Jet in harness and trainer Gene Miller, that is approximately nine inches tall. The second section of the story runs across the bottom of the page, again with a photo, three columns wide and four inches tall.

To read the story, click [here](#). (USTA)

Last Call For Groom Of The Year Nominations

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2012 Groom of the Year Award. The award, sponsored annually by Harness Tracks of America and Hanover Shoe Farms, recognizes the unsung heroes of the sport, the grooms who maintain the health and welfare of the sport's horses.

All that is needed to nominate a groom for the 31st annual Groom of the Year award is a letter from an individual or group to Harness Tracks of America detailing the skills and special qualities of the groom. The winning groom receives an oil painting of himself or herself with the horse of their choice. All individuals nominated for the award receive a certificate of excellence and the first 50 grooms nominated also receive an embroidered jacket as a groom of the year nominee.

The "Groom of the Year" Award was founded in 1982 after Delvin Miller, addressing attendees at the annual HTA meeting as its Messenger Award winner for that year, noted the sport gave no recognition to its grooms, its unsung stars. The 2011 "Groom of the Year" was Greg Haverstick.

The deadline for nominations is Dec. 31, 2012. All letters detailing why candidates are deserving of the honor as groom of the year should be submitted by fax or email to Harness Tracks of America, (520) 529-3235 or by e-mail to delight@harnesstracks.com.

Letters must contain the name, address, telephone number and jacket size (S, M, L, XL, XXL) for the nominated groom, along with the name, address and telephone number of the nominator. (HTA)

RACE LINES

Harness Racing Leaders

Compiled by the USTA—through Dec. 26, 2012 (week difference Dec. 19-26).

Leading North American-Based Money-Winning Horses

	Sts.	W	P	S	Earnings
Market Share (3tc)	20	10	5	3	\$2,001,405
Michael's Power (3pg)	20	14	2	1	1,463,912
Thinking Out Loud (3pc)	24	7	5	5	1,215,364
Foiled Again (8pg)	24	7	8	5	1,207,429
American Jewel (3pf)	16	9	4	2	1,163,449
Sweet Lou (3pc)	20	8	4	3	1,082,176
A Rocknroll Dance (3pc)	22	4	5	3	1,070,529
Heston Blue Chip (3pc)	18	14	1	1	1,030,008
Chapter Seven (4th)	10	8	2	0	1,023,025
Mister Herbie (4tg)	12	6	4	0	956,343
Check Me Out (3tf)	15	11	2	1	955,326
Little Brown Fox (3tc)	19	7	5	5	952,261
Golden Receiver (7pg)	25	13	5	2	941,025
Pet Rock (3pc)	22	8	6	4	934,518
Captaintreacherous (2pc)	10	8	1	1	918,253

Leading Money-Winning Drivers

	Sts.	W-P-S	UDR	Earnings (wk. diff)
Tim Tetrick	3,112	666-467-435	.344	\$18,469,310 (\$126,370)
Yannick Gingras	2,399	429-402-331	.318	13,686,560 (206,185)
George Brennan	2,525	622-431-328	.384	10,844,705 (136,120)
David Miller	2,850	446-398-380	.279	10,812,671 (106,645)
Ron Pierce	2,873	429-413-404	.276	9,952,301 (126,577)
Brian Sears	2,123	420-352-309	.338	9,932,089 (71,430)
Jody Jamieson	1,838	326-251-218	.293	9,113,428 (161,017)
Dave Palone	2,616	675-398-273	.377	8,907,620 (68,468)
Scott Zeron	2,065	347-270-236	.279	8,648,974 (111,827)
Sylvain Filion	2,318	427-316-296	.303	8,589,314 (129,975)
Jason Bartlett	2,757	414-372-369	.270	7,725,294 (56,236)
Jim Morrill Jr.	1,526	404-299-196	.416	7,711,605 (0)
Corey Callahan	3,154	514-420-435	.283	7,329,765 (94,777)
Randy Waples	1,665	213-249-222	.255	7,178,263 (104,577)
Andy Miller	2,264	294-351-275	.256	7,083,785 (115,625)

Leading Money-Winning Trainers

	Sts.	W-P-S	UTR	Earnings (wk. diff)
Ron Burke	4,138	902-665-530	.350	\$19,655,601 (\$229,662)
Jimmy Takter	506	128-82-59	.382	9,147,352 (2,400)
Casie Coleman	778	221-145-99	.430	6,828,744 (46,508)
Linda Toscano	440	101-79-69	.382	6,718,028 (0)
Tony Alagna	683	117-92-83	.287	4,865,921 (7,339)
Erv Miller	1,441	262-251-194	.323	4,319,174 (11,856)
Mark Ford	1,863	246-250-229	.248	4,209,847 (38,500)
Bob McIntosh	590	110-88-84	.317	4,076,595 (0)
Ray Schnittker	839	109-116-97	.245	3,964,362 (1,040)
Jeff Gillis	626	114-89-72	.299	3,951,168 (31,350)
Tony O'Sullivan	762	151-110-98	.321	3,864,272 (76,023)
Rene Allard	1,694	447-306-216	.407	3,760,012 (99,405)
P.J. Fraley	939	187-138-135	.329	3,739,415 (39,130)
Richard Norman	451	88-52-53	.298	3,593,572 (18,000)
Richard Moreau	1,399	333-224-176	.369	3,565,802 (68,755)

Leading Breeders

Breeder	Starters	Winners	Wins	Earnings
Hanover Shoe Farms Inc.	1,081	754	2,476	\$29,908,583
Winbak Farm	1,092	686	2,073	20,343,236
Brittany Farms	315	217	790	10,868,625
Perretti Farms	357	252	785	9,230,119
Kentuckiana Farms Gen Par	304	203	642	7,903,779
White Birch Farm	168	113	400	6,304,063
Blue Chip Bloodstock Inc.	184	133	450	6,260,198
Robert McIntosh Stables Inc.	160	117	445	5,773,649
Walnut Hall Limited	245	172	582	5,096,818
Steve Stewart	139	97	340	4,608,492
Arlene & Jules Siegel	174	132	436	4,572,142
Perfect World Enterprises	187	126	420	4,224,862
Fox Valley Standardbreds	240	157	481	3,777,034
Robert J. Key	134	72	196	3,693,665
Frederick Hertrich III	165	122	408	3,584,344

Leaders Of The Week

Ranked by wins for Dec. 19-26 from results at major North American pari-mutuel tracks.

Drivers	Starts	W-P-S
Aaron Merriman	70	22-14-9
Tyler Smith	56	15-10-7
Bruce Aldrich Jr.	50	14-8-8
Trevor Henry	36	14-3-4
Ronnie Wrenn Jr.	58	12-11-8
Stephane Gendron	36	12-1-10
Jody Jamieson	35	11-5-7
George Brennan	29	10-9-1
George Napolitano Jr.	38	10-10-4
Simon Allard	45	10-9-6
Sylvain Filion	42	10-8-4
Tim Tetrick	49	10-6-7
Yannick Gingras	46	10-9-6
Cat Manzi	31	9-3-6
James Kennedy	40	9-8-4
Luke Plano	47	9-10-1
Bruce Clarke	24	8-5-3
Dave Palone	35	8-5-4
John MacDonald	44	8-4-6
Michael Oosting	41	8-5-5
Sam Widger	53	8-7-6
Casey Leonard	52	7-7-7
Kevin Wallis	20	7-4-1
Lemoyne Svendsen	38	7-8-5
Ron Pierce	47	7-5-6

Trainers	Wins
Ron Burke	14
Rene Allard	13
Tim Brown	8
Bob Johnson	7
Jamie Copley	7
Bruce Clarke	6
Frank Petrelli	6
Gilberto Garcia-Herrera	5
Michael Hall	5
Michael Temming	5
Nelson Willis	5
Richard Moreau	5
Carmen Auciello	4
Josh Green	4
Larry Clabaugh	4
Mark Ford	4
Philip Sowers	4

JANUARY 2013



sunday monday tuesday wednesday thursday friday saturday

 <p><i>-Happy-</i> New Year 2013</p>		1 <small>New Year's Day</small>	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 <small>Super Bowl 40T-1st leg (M)</small>	11 <small>Clyde Hirt 4HP-1st leg (M)</small>	12 <small>Presidential OP—1st leg (M)</small>
13	14	15	16	17 <small>Super Bowl 40T-2nd leg (M)</small>	18 <small>Clyde Hirt 4HP-2nd leg (M)</small>	19 <small>Presidential OP-2nd leg (M)</small>
20	21 <small>Martin Luther King Jr. Day Tattersalls Mixed Sale at E. Rutherford, N.J.</small>	22	23	24	25	26 <small>Clyde Hirt 4HP final (M) Presidential OP final (M) Super Bowl 40T final (M)</small>
27	28	29	30	31	 <p>BLOODED HORSE SALES COMPANY</p>	

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