Gimpanzee Aims For TVG Open Trot 3YO Three-Peat

Three year olds have won the past two editions of the TVG Open Trot, and it's the hope of the connections of Gimpanzee that he makes it three years in a row on Saturday night at the Meadowlands.

By virtue of their victories in the Breeders Crown 3-Year-Old Colt Trot, WhatThe Hill and Tactical Landing were invited to the TVG Open and they both came up winners. Gimpanzee also received his invitation by virtue of his Breeders Crown triumph.

The TVG Open Trot is just one of four TVG finals for older horses set for Saturday. The card, which offers total purses of more than $2.8 million, also includes the Fall Final Four for 2 year olds of both gaits and genders.

“His got nothing to prove and he's in against older horses. I'm sure he won't disappoint.”
--Brian Sears about Gimpanzee

Gimpanzee comes into the race with eight wins in 13 starts—including the Yonkers Trot—and $1,101,313 in earnings.

“His got nothing to prove and he's in against older horses. I'm sure he won't disappoint.”
--Brian Sears about Gimpanzee

Gimpanzee will stand at stud beginning in 2020.

Brian Sears was the regular driver of both Gimpanzee and Greenshoe, but when the pair matched up on the track in a trio of races in September and October, he remained with the latter. David Miller then got the drive behind Gimpanzee for the Breeders Crown. But Sears got the drive back for Gimpanzee’s last start in the Nov. 14 Matron at Dover Downs, which he won in 1:51.1.

Seven horses will line up behind the gate in the $350,000 TVG Open Trot (Race 10), with Gimpanzee in post 2 and listed as the 5-2 second choice on the morning line. The 3-1 third-choice Six Pack will start from post 1, while the 4-year-old mare Manchego, tabbed the 2-1 favorite by oddsmaker Dave Brower and riding a six-race winning streak, starts in post 5.

“I love that little horse,” Sears said about Gimpanzee, who is owned by Courant Inc. and SRF Stable. “He’s been so good to me; he’s been good to everybody. He’s such a pleasure to drive. He’s just a little, classy guy.”

Gimpanzee comes into the race with eight wins in 13 starts—including the Yonkers Trot—and $1,101,313 in earnings.
What does Sears think about Gimpanzee’s chances against the older horses, a race that could determine honors for Dan Patch 3-Year-Old Colt Trotter of the Year as well as Trotter of the Year?

“He’s got nothing to prove and he’s in against older horses,” said Sears, who last year drove Tactical Landing to his TVG victory. “We’ll try to make the best of it. I’m sure he won’t disappoint.”

Sears will also drive McWicked in the $350,000 TVG Open Pace (Race 8). As the series point leader, McWicked drew for posts 1 through 6, and he landed post 4. The defending TVG champion, McWicked is the 7-2 second choice, behind the 3-year-old Bettor’s Wish, who is the slight 3-1 favorite.

After being scratched from the Potomac Pace on Nov. 10 at Rosecroft Raceway by trainer Casie Coleman after spiking a fever, McWicked comes into the TVG Open Pace off a third-place finish in a Nov. 15 qualifier at the Meadowlands.

“I’m not looking to impress anybody with the qualifier,” said Sears. “I think his resume speaks for himself. Coming off being sick, I wasn’t going to put him under a lot of stress.

“It’s a short score when you go out there to qualify so he wasn’t really fired up on the bit. He was pretty dull acting. I’m not going wake him up for a qualifier. I’m going to take him around there and let him do what he wants to do.”

With $4,914,342 in earnings, a win would put McWicked past the $5-million mark for his career; a second-place finish would leave him just short. McWicked’s earnings easily make him the richest stallion in harness history, and second on the all-time pacing list behind only Foiled Again.

McWicked’s 110th career start in the TVG will be his last, as owner Ed James (SSG Stables) has announced he is retiring the 2018 Horse of the Year for stallion duty in 2020.

“I hate to see him go, he’s meant so much to me,” said Sears. “He put me in so many great spots and gave me opportunities to win so many good races. It’s been a lot of fun.” —By Gordon Waterstone
Happy Thanksgiving

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Captain Crunch dominates In Progress Pace Elim

Captain Crunch literally crunched the competition in Wednesday night’s Hap Hansen Progress Pace elimination at Dover Downs. Nine horses went behind the gate to eliminate one for the $335,000 Thanksgiving Eve (Nov. 27) final and Captain Crunch led gate to wire to score in 1:47 .3, setting a new divisional and all-age track record.

Starting from post 5 with driver Yannick Gingras, the strong 9-5 second-choice Captain Crunch took control early and took no prisoners. Keeping the field pretty much in lined-up fashion, Captain Crunch winged his way through fractions of :26.4, :54 (:27 .1) and 1:21.1 (:27 .1). Captain Crunch drew clear with a final quarter of :26.2 to win by 3 1/4 lengths over US Captain. American Mercury finished third, just ahead of betting favorite Dancin Lou.

The win was Captain Crunch’s first in eight starts, his last trip to the winner’s circle coming in the $285,362 Cane Pace on Aug. 3 at the Meadowlands.

Gingras picked up the drive for the first time for the $600,000 Breeders Crown final, where Captain Crunch finished third. In his next start in the $248,350 Matron at Dover Downs, which led into the Progress Pace elim, Captain Crunch made an uncharacteristic break going to the half to take himself out of contention.

“Last week, he just jumped something,” said Gingras. “I’m not sure what he even saw because I went back around looking for paper or tape or something, but there was nothing there. He was in a good spot but he definitely jumped something going to the half. Whether he would have won or not, I don’t know, but he was going to give them a run.”

Because of that miscue, Gingras changed strategy in the Progress elim. He decided to leave the gate fast with Captain Crunch. And he kept his foot on the gas pedal.

“I wanted to keep his attention and not let him do anything stupid like last week,” he explained. “If there was a piece of paper I wouldn’t have worried about it, but there was nothing on the track. Sometimes if you go slow their minds start to wander, so I wanted to keep him moving along. He still came home in :26 off those big fractions, and that’s pretty impressive.”

Trainer Nancy Johansson, who was involved in a car accident on her way to Dover and arrived unscathed at the track with just 20 minutes to spare before the race, said she made some equipment changes after the Matron miscue.

“He jumped his shadow last week. Apparently he likes to do that and go in 1:47 afterwards,” Johansson said with a laugh. “So we changed his shadow roll and put a screen on him.”

Johansson also added Lasix prior to the colt finishing second in a Bluegrass division Sept. 29 at The Red Mile, and in his last two starts in Delaware she used an adjunct Lasix—used for heavier bleeders—as allowed in the First State.

“I used Amicar, which stops bleeding,” said Johansson. “A lot of trainers, including myself, when we train our horses that are on Lasix, we’ll train them on Amicar because it’s a lot easier on the horse. You have your vet give it to your horse right before they go on the track, it’s not something that has to be given three or four hours out like Lasix. It’s an efficient, friendly companion to Lasix, obviously.”

A win in the final would send Captain Crunch’s seasonal earnings past the $1-million mark for owners Christina Takter, 3 Brothers Stable, Rojan Stables and Caviart Farms. The 2019 North America Cup champ is making his final career start in the Progress Pace as he is headed to Diamond Creek Farm in Pennsylvania for stallion duty next year.

“He’s such a good horse,” said Johansson “When things fall into play, I don’t think there are many horses in the country who can beat him. He’s proven that time and time again.”

Also advancing to next week’s final are Shake That House, Semi Tough, De Los Cielos Deo and Pyro. With a last-place finish, Southwind Ozzi is the sole horse to be eliminated (Love Me Some Lou was scratched “sick” from the elim). — By Gordon Waterstone
Ryder’s “Wish” Is To Win TVG Open Pace

Invitations extended to 3 year olds were accepted in all four TVG finals set for Saturday night at the Meadowlands, including Bettor’s Wish, who starts from post 7 in the $350,000 Open Pace. Bettor’s Wish is the second 3-year-old male pacer to compete against the older horses in the TVG Open, joining Captaintreacherous, who finished sixth in 2013.

“I decided to enter him after talking to (driver) Dexter Dunn after he won the Matron,” said trainer Chris Ryder. “We said as long as he raced good in the Matron, we were going to go.”

Bettor’s Wish has had a spectacular sophomore campaign, winning 13 of 18 starts. His five losses were all second-place efforts, and by a combined margin of just one length. Bettor’s Wish received his TVG invite after capturing a Tattersalls division at The Red Mile in early October.

Following the Tattersalls, Bettor’s Wish won his Breeders Crown elimination and then was second—by a head—in the $600,000 final. In his next start three weeks later, Bettor’s Wish won the $248,350 Matron in 1:49.2. Ryder, who was visiting his native New Zealand at the time, watched via computer.

“I spoke to Dexter after the Matron, and he said to go (to the TVG),” said Ryder. “If he doesn’t know, then who does?”

Bettor’s Wish is the richest Standardbred in 2020 with $1,560,620 in earnings. Just a $20,000 yearling purchase, the son of Bettor’s Delight has amassed $1,832,676 in career earnings for Ryder, Bella Racing, Fair Island Farm and Bettor’s Wish Partners.

Although Bettor’s Wish is the lone 3 year old in the race, his stellar record led to him being tabbed the 3-1 morning-line favorite, a slight choice over the 7-2 McWicked, who won last year’s TVG Open on his way to Horse of the Year honors. Bettor’s Wish will start from post 7, with McWicked lining up in post 4.

“Hey, it’s a horse race and we’re in it, and we’re pleased to be in it,” said Ryder.—By Gordon Waterstone

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North America’s Ultimate STALLION DIRECTORY
Can Warrawee Ubeaut Upset Shartin N In TVG Mares Pace?

With her win in last year’s TVG Mare final, Shartin N became the first older pacing mare to surpass the $1-million mark in seasonal earnings. If Shartin N successfully defends her title in Saturday night’s $175,000 TVG renewal at the Meadowlands, she will again top the $1-million mark for the year.

Two possible roadblocks to Shartin N’s chances are Breeders Crown champion Caviart Ally and the 3-year-old filly Warrawee Ubeaut.

Warrawee Ubeaut comes into the race off a fourth-place finish on Nov. 14 in the $165,900 Matron at Dover Downs, which put a halt to her eight-race winning streak. Invited to the TVG by virtue of her Garnsey Memorial and Breeders Crown victories, Warrawee Ubeaut will start from post 4. As the series point-leader, Shartin N drew from the inside six posts, and she landed post 1.

“I think she’ll rebound quite nicely this week. I am confident in that.”
– Yannick Gingras about Warrawee Ubeaut

“I was a tough loss,” driver Yannick Gingras said about Warrawee Ubeaut’s off-the-board effort in the Matron after leading into the stretch. “I knew before I even got to the last turn that mine wasn’t herself. I think she’ll rebound quite nicely this week. I am confident in that. It was just a little blip on the road. I think she’ll be totally fine this week.”

Gingras said having Shartin N starting from the inside post could work to his advantage as he expects Tim Tetrick, who drives the reigning divisional champ, to have to make some early decisions.

“(Tetrick) will have to move her a couple of times, and that’s not the worst thing to happen,” said Gingras. “No doubt she is the horse to beat, but I love my filly and I think she’s got a shot.”

Gingras will also drive Atlanta in the short five-horse field in the $175,000TVG Mare Trot. Atlanta will start from post 1 as the 6-5 morning-line favorite, with defending TVG champ Emoticon Hanover the 5-2 second choice in post 2. The small field also includes the 2017 Horse of the Year Hannelore Hanover, Swedish import Darling Mearas S, and the 3-year-old Beautiful Sin, invited as a result of her win in the Kentucky Filly Futurity.

After winning seven of her first 11 starts this year, including a world-record 1:49.1 effort at the Meadowlands, Atlanta twice took on males, finishing seventh in the Yonkers Inter-

Gingras Talks Final Four

GOVERNOR’S CUP 2CP—Cattlewash (post 2)

“He finished second to Papi Rob (Hanover) in the Matron and third in the Breeders Crown behind (Tall Dark Stranger). He may not quite be (3-5 favorite) Papi Rob, but I think he has a shot to make some good money in there. My horse is nice and can travel all day, so we’ll see what happens.”

GOLDSMITH MAID 2FT—Sister Sledge (post 1)

“She wasn’t super healthy in the Breeders Crown final and I think she showed some super guts there. She was really tired halfway down the stretch and could have easily been fourth or fifth, but she kept digging and finished second. Ronnie (Burke) qualified her last week and she looked pretty good qualifying. She needed the work so she should be a little bit better than she was in the qualifier. I wouldn’t trade her for anybody in there. If she’s not the horse to beat, she’s one of them.”

THREE DIAMONDS 2FP—JK First Lady (post 5)

“I was really happy with her in the elimination (a 1:52.2 win). She has post 5 and it’s a good spot for her. I think she’s better racing from behind and racing off cover, but post 5 gives me options. I’ll probably have to go forward but we’ll see. I’ll go behind the gate and be open-minded and see what happens. I’ll see what the rest of the horses do and go from there.”

VALLEY VICTORY 2CT—Ready For Moni (post 6)

“He’s qualified twice now and he qualified really good (1:57 and 1:54 wins). They were hoping for an elimination last week but there wasn’t. Of course, Amigo Volo is a standout, but I don’t think there’s anything wrong with mine. If he puts up his best performance then he’s got a shot.”

To Be Published December 4
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USTA: RMTC Doesn’t Represent All Harness Racing

In an announcement from the Racing Medication & Testing Consortium (RMTC) on Wednesday (Nov. 21) regarding non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) administration time and intra-articular injections, that organization inaccurately portrayed their relationship with the U.S. Trotting Association when they stated that, “The RMTC consists of 23 racing industry stakeholders and organizations that represent Thoroughbred, Standardbred, American Quarter Horse and Arabian racing.”

“A review of the RMTC release reveals an unjustified and regrettable misrepresentation,” said USTA President Russell Williams. “The RMTC does not represent the Standardbred breed in any way. Only the United States Trotting Association and the Harness Racing Medication Collaborative (HRMC) can speak for the Standardbred breed regarding medication issues.”

The Hambletonian Society, however, is still a Standardbred breed and racing representative on the RMTC board. The Society joined RMTC at the formation of the organization and is still a voting member.

The RMTC and its Scientific Advisory Committee make recommendations, but not rules. Rules are put in place by individual racing commissions.

The RMTC press release on Nov. 21 regarding corticosteroids failed to note that their recommendation prohibiting their use within 14 days of a race only applies to “flat and jump racing” and DOES NOT APPLY to Standardbreds/harness racing.

Joe Faraldo, chairman of the Harness Racing Medication Collaborative, echoed Williams’ declaration.

“As chairman of the USTA’s Harness Racing Medication Collaborative let me be quite clear that RMTC does NOT represent the Standardbred industry,” said Faraldo.

“The harness industry operates under an altogether different training regimen and is a more durable breed than our Thoroughbred counterparts,” explained Faraldo. “The genesis for such a proposed rule is founded on the unfortunate reaction to the Santa Anita catastrophe, which has gathered significant negative public attention but has no relationship to any Standardbred experience. Our incidence of catastrophic breakdowns is a statistical anomaly as compared to other breeds and hence such rules such as these, should under no circumstances be made applicable to the Standardbred industry.

“Rules such as these, referred to any state commission through RMTC or even RCI (Association of Racing Commissioners International), as its conduit, is not representative of rules more appropriately applicable to the harness racing industry and should therefore not be applied to it,” added Faraldo. “The HRMC shall provide the state racing commissions and others with appropriate regulations that are consistent with any and all integrity concerns related to permitted, therapeutic medications whether directly or through RCI.”

On Sept. 25, 2013, the Executive Committee of the USTA unanimously voted to reject RCI proposed model medication rules and in a separate unanimous vote, agreed that the USTA would immediately withdraw its membership from the RMTC.

“We have carefully considered the RCI proposals and have come to the conclusion that the physical characteristics of the breeds are significantly different. Trying to fit them together makes little sense,” said then USTA president Phil Langley. “We believe both breeds, Standardbreds and Thoroughbreds, will benefit from having rules concentrated solely on their needs.”

On May 8, 2018, the USTA, through the Medication Subcommittee of the USTA Board of Directors, established the HRMC, a group that includes both academic and practicing veterinarians.

The HRMC’s purpose is to assist in identifying and developing the scientific background for medication regulation in Standardbred racing. The USTA utilizes HRMC’s reports and supporting data to present to the RCI for dissemination to regulators in the various racing commissions.

“We won the battle with RCI (Racing Commissioners International) to have the breeds recognized separately,” added Williams. “There is no upside for the Standardbred breed of horse to be treated as the same as Thoroughbreds.”

Fred And Ginger Standing In Illinois In 2020

The stallion Fred And Ginger p, 2, 1:52.4f; 3, 1:48.4f; 1:47.3, has been relocated to Farrier’s Acres Farm in Arcola, Ill., for the 2020 breeding season.

“We believe that the Illinois breeding program is about to explode and we want to be a big part of it,” said ownership principal Howard Taylor. “With the passing of Sportsmaster, who was the leading sire in the state, we believe that Fred And Ginger will be the premier stallion standing in Illinois in 2020.”

Fred And Ginger earned $1,053,740 while capturing the Max Hempt Memorial, a leg of the TVG Series, and multiple Pennsylvania Sires Stakes. He competed against such notables as Sweet Lou, Pet Rock and Warrawee Needy.

From a very limited first crop, “Fred” is the sire of Shnitzledosomethin p, 4, 1:49.1 ($738,362), who won an elimination of the Breeders Crown 3-Year-Old Colt Pace and finished second in the final.

Fred And Ginger is standing for an introductory fee of $2,000 for the 2020 season.
Dave Palone Wins 19,000th Race

Already harness racing’s “winningest” driver, Dave Palone took another historic step into uncharted territory Tuesday at The Meadows when he collected career victory 19,000. The milestone mile came with Southwind Warsaw in Race 10.

By way of comparison, Russell Baze, the all-time wins leader in Thoroughbred racing, notched 12,842 victories.

Palone was met in the winners’ circle by his mother, Jean; his wife, Bethann; daughters Hannah, Alana and Sophie; his brother Mike Palone, a longtime Meadows-based trainer who, appropriately enough, was the conditioner of Southwind Warsaw; Kim Hankins, executive director of the Meadows Standardbred Owners Association (MSOA); and other family, friends and fans.

As the historic event neared, Palone indicated he could feel his emotions rising.

“It really hasn’t hit me yet,” he said. “Everybody’s been getting excited about it, and that’s getting me kind of excited. It’s been fun.”

Palone, who began driving in 1982, has achieved a career full of highlights that have rewritten the sport’s record books. On July 5, 2012, he scored career win 15,181 to break Herve Filion’s longstanding North American record—and was greeted in the winners’ circle by the gracious Filion.

On Nov. 14, 2014, he became the “winningest” driver on the planet when career victory 16,754 vaulted him past Germany’s Heinz Wewering, who sent a pre-recorded congratulatory message.

Palone was inducted into the Harness Hall of Fame on July 4, 2010. If he wraps up the 2019 driving title at The Meadows—he’s comfortably ahead—it will be his 30th consecutive season as the track’s top dog.

At 57, Palone has begun to cut back some. Of his more than 73,000 career starts, 2,827 came in 2008, his most prolific season. (That year also marked his highest single-season UDR, .446). In 2019, he’s logged 1,614 starts as of mid-November.

“I don’t envy those guys who bounce around two tracks every day,” he says. “I’m enjoying things a lot more driving full cards. It’s more important for me right now to be at my kids’ events. There comes a time when you have to decide which way you want to go. When you get to my point in life, family is more important.”

Earlier in his career, Palone dabbled in training; he has 34 wins in 100 training starts, but his most recent start as a trainer occurred in 2000. He doesn’t see himself transitioning to full-time training but can envision a day where he’s involved.

“At some point, I’d like to help a trainer by working with babies. Trainers work way too hard for me. They’re working with their horses seven days a week; I’m putting in two minutes. For all the work trainers are putting in, they deserve my best effort.”

For now, he plans to enjoy following the career of Hannah, who works as a caretaker for Ron Burke—“it’s special seeing her passion for horses”—and drive for as long as he can.

“I keep driving, I show up for work every day, and I’m grateful for the opportunity. I enjoy racing horses as much as I ever did and want to keep at it, but Father Time is undefeated.”

— By Evan Pattak/Meadows Standardbred owners Association

Prior to Dave Palone’s historic 19,000th driving victory, the Hall of Famer sat down with track photographer Chris Gooden to discuss his career. To watch the video, please click here.
Valley Victory Contender Southwind Fulton Has Been Worth The Wait

His arrival was delayed, but Southwind Fulton is ready for his first big dance.

Southwind Fulton, who saw his season slowed by growth issues and throat surgery, will make his first stakes appearance on the Grand Circuit’s final weekend when he competes in Saturday’s $505,050 Valley Victory for 2-year-old male trotters at the Meadowlands. The Lucas Wallin-trained colt has only three starts but won his past two races by a total of more than 14 lengths.

“It’s good for him to race against these kinds of horses one time before we turn him out.”

–Lucas Wallin

Of course, I would like to have three more starts in him before racing against these guys, but it is what it is,” said Wallin, who trains Southwind Fulton for owner Mazza Racing Stables. “The other horses have more races and faster times, but I think if he can follow a horse, he should be OK.

“It’s tough to say (what his potential is) when he only has three starts, but I think he’s a Grand Circuit horse next year. He doesn’t have the fastest miles, but the way he won his two races was very good. He did both very easy. It’s good for him to race against these kinds of horses one time before we turn him out. It is a good learning experience.”

Southwind Fulton will face a well-tested group led by Breeders Crown and Matron Stakes winner Amigo Volo. The 10-horse field also includes Rome Pays Off, a state-bred stakes winner in Pennsylvania who was runner-up in both the Breeders Crown and Peter Haughton Memorial, plus Kindergarten Classic Series champion EL Ideal and Kentucky Sire Stakes winner Amigo Volo. The family also includes stakes-winners Big Rigs and Miss Tezsla.

“He’s been good all the time,” Wallin said. “We took him to the Meadowlands in May and he showed some speed already. But then he started to grow, and we had to take our time with him. When we started to bring him back to race, his throat started struggling. We had to take him to (Dr.) Patty Hogan and the throat seems to be good now, but he lost a month of training.”

Southwind Fulton heads to the Valley Victory off two qualifiers following his two conditioned wins in October at Harrah’s Philadelphia. His most recent qualifier was Nov. 16, when he led for three-quarters of the mile before finishing fourth. He was timed in 1:55.3, with David Miller in the sulky.

Hanover’s Pacing Yearlings Top Harrisburg

The Horseman And FairWorld’s Breeders Crown edition (Nov. 13) also included the results of the recent Standardbred Horse Sale auction in Harrisburg, Pa., but one sale listing—Pacing Colts—omitted two very notable yearlings.

Hanover Shoe Farms, the sport’s all-time leading money-winning breeder, sold two pacing colts in Harrisburg for $300,000-plus prices. Those two yearlings were inadvertently omitted from The Horseman’s listing of “Pacing Colts” sold, which appeared on page 22 of the Nov. 13 edition.

Hanover sold Hip 149, Dean B Hanover, a Betting Line colt, for $340,000, and Hip 163, Full Of It Hanover, a colt by Somebeachsomewhere, for $310,000. Those two colts were the top prices for all pacing-bred colts sold at the sale.

Hanover was also the only breeder to sell a pacing filly for more than $200,000, and it sold the top four pacing fillies at the sale: Panda Hanover ($400,000), Faraday Hanover ($275,000), Takeaway Hanover ($225,000) and Imonabeach Hanover ($200,000).

The Hanover Shoe Farms consignment of 233 yearlings was comprised of 136 pacing-bred yearlings, which generated gross sales of $8,142,000. Hanover sold 65 pacing colts which generated an average price of $69,554. Overall, Hanover attained an average price of $61,678 (16.7 percent increase) from gross sales of $14,371,000, an increase in gross of a whopping $2,274,000.

Hanover also reinvested in its broodmare band at the mixed sale which followed the Harrisburg yearling auction. Hanover purchased four broodmares, spending $1,245,000. Its acquisitions included Secret Passion, a Yankee Glide full sister to Manchego, who cost $425,000; the 2019 stakes winner Starita 3, 1:53.3, who hails from the maternal family of $2 million winner Passionate Glide, who was a $360,000 purchase; the pacing mare Percy Bluechip, a $340,000 purchase; and Fashion Defiant, a Muscle Massive filly from the family of world champion Beat The Wheel, for $120,000.

“He’s an honest horse and normally has good stamina,” Wallin said. “The last qualifier, Dave left a little with him and he got a little too grabby and went a :27.1 first quarter. We’re going to try a couple of new things and see if we can calm him down. He’s normally a very relaxed and calm horse. Dave asked him to go a little bit and he got a little too grabby. That’s something we have to work on. But he should be fine.” (By Ken Weingartner)
**NIAGARA**

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Raced at Woodbine Mohawk Park

**Nomination fee:** $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)

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Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

**BLIZZARD**

**EVENT #34:** Three and Four year-old pacing fillies & mares in 2020, non-winners of two races or $30,000 lifetime as of midnight, October 31, 2019. No allowances.
Raced at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

**Nomination fee:** $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)

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Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

**WINE & ROSES**

**EVENT #36:** Three and Four year-old trotting fillies & mares in 2020, non-winners $60,000 lifetime as of midnight, October 31, 2019. No allowances.
Raced at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

**Nomination fee:** $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)

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Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

**VALEDICTORY**

**EVENT #62:** Three year old pacing colts and geldings in 2019, non-winners of $60,000 lifetime, as of midnight, October 31, 2019. No allowances.
Raced at Woodbine Mohawk Park

**Nomination fee:** $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)

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Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

**SNOWSHOE**

**EVENT #35:** Three and Four year-old pacing colts, horses & geldings in 2020, non-winners of two races or $30,000 lifetime as of midnight, October 31, 2019. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

**Nomination fee:** $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)

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Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

**PEPSI**

**EVENT #37:** Three and Four year-old trotting colts, horses & geldings in 2020, non-winners of $60,000 lifetime as of midnight, October 31, 2019. No allowances. Raced at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

**Nomination fee:** $200 CDN ($165 U.S.)

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Declarations close as posted on weekly condition sheet

Send To: Woodbine Mohawk Park, ATT: Kim Neelands, 9430 Guelph Line, PO Box 160, Campbellville, ON L0P 1B0
Make checks payable to Woodbine Entertainment. Nomination fees in all stakes must accompany nomination. We nominate the horse(s) specified on this sheet in the above race(s) and agree to all conditions.

Nominator: __________________________  TRAINER: __________________________

Telephone #: __________________________  Cell Phone #: __________________________

Signature: __________________________  Email: __________________________

On-line payment option @ woodbine.com/mohawk/standardbred-nomination

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Harness Racing Weekend Preview, 12 of 18

November 22, 2019

www.harnessracing.com

Bettor’s Wish Completes Undefeated Season!

You are about to enter another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind. A journey into a wondrous land of imagination. Next stop, the Twilight Zone!

Now that Bettor’s Wish has completed one of the most spectacular seasons of racing in history, I can only use the words of the late, great play-by-play announcer Jack Buck when Kirk Gibson hit the home run to win Game 1 of the 1988 World Series for the Dodgers over the A’s: “I don’t believe what I just saw!”

In today’s racing world I would have never thought it possible that a horse could go undefeated in a single year, let alone at the sport’s highest level, where he or she races against the best. But that’s what Bettor’s Wish accomplished after winning all 18 of his starts. No, there is no Triple Crown on his resume as he didn’t race in the Little Brown Jug, but neither did Somebeachsomewhere in his 2008 Horse of the Year campaign that saw the superstar pacer earn $2,448,003, the most ever in a single year by a pacer.

What’s that you say? Bettor’s Wish was NOT undefeated? OK, I’ll admit, I’ve fudged the truth for this column, but considering that Bettor’s Wish’s five losses came at a combined cost of just one length, you too have to admit how close we came to seeing one of the all-time greatest years ever.

In my alternate universe, Bettor’s Wish earned $2,308,471 for his connections of trainer Chris Ryder and partners Bella Racing, Fair Island Farm and Bettors Wish Partners, putting him third on the pacing list, behind only SBSW and Gallo Blue Chip, who amassed $2,428,816 in his 2001 Horse of the Year season. All three pacers still stood behind Muscle Hill, the trotter who was a perfect 12-for-12 in 2012 with $2,456,041 in earnings.

Let’s look back at Bettor’s Wish’s still-remarkable “real” campaign: After four wins to open up 2019, Bettor’s Wish finished three-quarters of a length behind Captain Crunch in the North America Cup. That was the farthest he ever missed going into the winner’s circle. He lost the Breeders Crown final, the Meadowlands Pace, and the Messenger by a head each, and the Cane Pace by a neck. By my math, that’s one length.

I remember Art Zubrod, who with his wife Leah as Fair Island Farm share ownership in the son of Bettor’s Delight—telling me after Bettor’s Wish won a Tattersalls division in early October at The Red Mile that the narrow losses—which counted four at the time as the Breeders Crown was yet to come—that the tough photo finishes cost the colt “super stardom in the sport.”

Not that Art was complaining. After all, Bettor’s Wish cost he and Leah just $5,000 of the total $20,000 yearling price. But how can he—and all the connections—not shut their eyes at night and wonder what might have been? Remember, four of Bettor’s Wish’s seconds came in his four biggest purse starts of the year. So while their collective eyes may have dreams about Bettor’s Wish’s dream career that brought them $1,832,676 in earnings, wouldn’t a bankroll of $2,580,887 been even better?

I opened with words from Jack Buck, so I’ll close it with more words from one of the all-time greats: “That’s a winner. Go crazy, folks! Go crazy!”

Congratulations to everybody involved with Bettor’s Wish, it was still one spectacular campaign. Good luck in the TVG.
After Crown Triumph, Bold Eagle
Expected For Top Paris Races

With the prestigious winter racing events in the coming weeks at the Vincennes racetrack in Paris, the superlative victory by Bold Eagle in the Breeders Crown at Woodbine Mohawk Park puts the French superstar at the forefront of the top contenders for the Prix d’Amerique, which will be contested Jan. 26 at the Vincennes track.

By Brandon Valvo/Breeders Crown

The journey began exactly a month ago, when Bold Eagle and his caretaker Hugues Monthule boarded a horse van in the French countryside. The pair made their way to the airport in Frankfurt, Germany, flew into Toronto International on Oct. 19 and were ensconced in the woody, overgrown Mohawk backstretch by the first race on Breeders Crown elimination night.

Flash forward to 10 a.m. Sunday morning (Oct. 27), Pierre Pilarski, Thomas and Sabine Bernereau, and Francois Jamier sat around a high-top table near the front of the Quest Restaurant on the ground floor of the Hilton Meadowvale hotel in Mississauga. The hotel was quiet, save for a few families checking out and a handful of early risers enjoying the pool and hot tub, and only a few of the restaurant’s tables were occupied.

Outside, overnight downpours late in the preceding evening and early that morning gave way to gray, overcast skies. The sharp, cold air left flags in tatters and whipped open hotel doors as high winds gusted through the Eastern Ontario city.

Despite the dreary conditions, Bold Eagle’s connections were relaxed and content. Bright-eyed and with smiles on their faces, they enjoyed each other’s company and cordially entertained the occasional visitors who offered congratulations, accolades, and thanks to the team who brought their champion trotter across the Atlantic to post a dominating victory in the Breeders Crown Open Trot only 11 hours before.

While the aftermath proved tranquil, the stallion became animated. While longtime caretaker Monthule and trainer Sebastien Guarato began to pull equipment out of the black tack box, Bold Eagle began lowering his head and pawing at the rubber-matted floor. Gentle pats on the shoulder, stern warnings, and kisses on the nose from Monthule helped stem the trotter’s eagerness, but Bold Eagle soon grew more excitable.

As Breeders Crown winners made their way past to the test barn, Bold Eagle fixed his gaze on them, extended his neck, and delivered deep, loud roars. His demonstrations intensified as the sophomore trotting fillies, stationed in the row across from Bold Eagle’s stall, lined up to head out to the track.

Jamier, an agent, the Bernereaus, co-owners, and Priscilla Navilloid, Bold Eagle’s masseuse and dentist, joined Monthule and Guarato as Bold Eagle prepared for his warmup around 9:45 p.m. Absent from the group was Pilarski, who remained in the clubhouse.

“He was too nervous to come see ‘Bold,’” said Kim Gudmand, a Danish photographer and fan who has followed Bold Eagle around Europe since the trotter’s 3-year-old campaign and has become close with the trotter’s owners. “He wanted to stay upstairs.”

“I was nervous, but it was not so much pressure from outside, it was more inside pressure,” Pilarski explained via translation by Jamier. “Now (Bold Eagle) is getting on the edge where he is not so easy in front like he used to be. We came over here, so of course there was some pressure.

“We went to downtown Toronto (Saturday) to get lunch and we all tried to get time just to de-stress. But when we arrived here, we could feel the pressure.”

In the early years of Bold Eagle’s career, the trotter would warm up twice on race day, once with Monthule and once with his driver. Now, the 8-year-old is too excitable on the track and only goes for one light preparation with his driver.

Driver Brian Sears took Bold Eagle one lap clockwise around the seven-furlong oval during a short break in the rain. Although high-strung, Bold Eagle quickly trotted up on the heels of two other joggers near the end of his lap and slowed to match their pace. Sears took Bold Eagle past the paddock and down the stretch, turned him, and went a short spurt at a quicker tempo before returning Bold Eagle to the hands of Monthule.

Sears hopped off the bike outside the paddock door.

Continues on page 14 ››››
“He was alright, pretty grabby,” Sears quickly commented before jumping in the bike behind Greenshoe and heading out for another race.

After his warm-up, Bold Eagle’s attitude changed again. Neck bowed and ears pinned back, the trotter put on his game face as the final preparations were made for his start.

Boosted by Bold Eagle’s work leading up to the race, Guarato had been steady all night.

“I was very satisfied and confident about the fact that he trained well,” Guarato said via translation by Jamier. “He handled the turns the right way and he was calm and relaxed and had good energy. I was confident to be one-two-three.”

A chink in Guarato’s armor of confidence finally showed as the trainer watched as a Go-Pro was affixed to one of the shafts of Bold Eagle’s sulky shortly before race time. Only after being reassured that American History carried the camera in his Open Pace victory earlier in the evening did Guarato’s fixation on the device subside.

At 10:40 p.m., Guarato and Monthule were at work in Bold Eagle’s stall making the final preparations for the race. Finally, Monthule unhooked the crossties and led Bold Eagle into the aisle. Guarato and Navillod hitched the brand new black-and-red Gorilla race bike to Bold Eagle’s harness and tightened the Go-Pro mount a final time. The Gorilla was one of three equipment changes that evening, replacing the Custom model bikes used by Björn Goop and Franck Nivard overseas. Bold Eagle would also race without an overcheck and martingale in the Breeders Crown.

“He has a tendency to play with it. It was the first time I took it off,” Guarato said.

Sears donned Pilarski’s black-and-red colors, slipped a yellow cap over his helmet, and adjusted his goggles before striding up to Bold Eagle. Tucking the whip under his right arm, Sears clipped the pull-cord for the earplugs in place near his left stirrup, took the lines in his brown-gloved hands, and then came the call from the judge crackling over the paddock’s loudspeakers.

While the rain had given way for Bold Eagle’s warm up, it returned with a vengeance for his race. In combination with high winds blowing down the stretch, the monsoon delayed the start of the 3-Year-Old Colt and Gelding Pace as pylons floated up out of their moorings and blew into the center of the track. Earlier in the evening, a wayward pylon forced a lead passing the half.

As easily as Bold Eagle left the gate, he put up two lengths in deep stretch. Sears took three glances over his right shoulder and on the last, realizing he could not be caught, raised his whip in victory.

In the clubhouse, Pilarski, the Bernereaus, and Jamier stood pressed up against the glass. They clapped, clapped, and leaned as Bold Eagle neared the finish.

The pent-up stresses of the evening were instantly lifted, and the heavy rains went unnoticed to the dozens of owners, friends, and fans of Bold Eagle who flooded the track on the way to the winner’s circle. Sears threw a Bold Eagle scarf around his neck, “Allez Bold Eagle,” and French flags flew, and smiles lit up the night as the cameras clicked away.

“I’m very, very happy for Bold, just to get this race in his record. To come here and to win,” Pilarski said, looking over his champion. “It’s going to make all his fans very happy.”

Although Bold Eagle is most regarded for his victories in the French classics going 2,700 meters, Guarato praised the trotter’s abilities at one mile. “The first time he went to Solvalla, he beat the European record. It was amazing. The first time he went to Solvalla, nobody saw that before, what he did there,” the trainer said. “The first time he’s come here, he’s a monster.”

“I’m extremely satisfied and happy,” Guarato said. “This horse brings a lot of happiness to everybody. The last couple of months, he was maybe not as good as he used to be. But he’s still a champion and today, to win in front of everybody in North America is huge, huge.”

Bold Eagle traveled home to France Friday, Nov. 1. He will seek a third victory in the Grand Prix d’Amérique at Vincennes this January. “The plan is to probably race every four weeks to prepare for the Prix d’Amérique,” Guarato said.

Bold Eagle has won the Prix d’Amérique twice (2016 and ’17). He is scheduled to race in the Prix du Bourbonnais on Dec. 8 in Paris.
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Nominations Now Open For Caretaker Of Year

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2019 Caretaker of the Year. The award, sponsored by Art Zubrod and Leah Chevrier’s Fair Island Farm in conjunction with the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA), recognizes the unsung heroes of the sport—the caretakers who maintain the health and welfare of the horses on a daily basis.

Initially titled Groom of the Year Award when first presented in 1982, the honor was instituted as a result of a suggestion made by Delvin Miller at the annual Harness Tracks of America meeting when he received HTA’s Stanley F. Bergstein Messenger Award. Previously sponsored annually by HTA and Hanover Shoe farms, the tradition lapsed in 2014 but was re-established in 2015 by Hard Rock Northfield Park and USHWA, with Fair Island Farm coming on this year.

“We have been presenting trophies to the winning caretakers during the Grand Circuit meet at The Red Mile for a couple of years now, so we are very honored and happy to be able to now recognize the national Caretaker of the Year,” said Zubrod.

The Fair Island Farm Caretaker of the Year will receive a cash prize of $500, a trophy, and transportation costs to the USHWA Dan Patch Awards banquet in Orlando, Fla., on Sunday evening, Feb. 23, 2020, where he or she will be recognized. The winner will also enjoy a two-night stay at Rosen Shingle Creek, host hotel for the USHWA activities, as well as two complimentary dinner tickets.

“Caretakers are the day-to-day unsung heroes of the industry, long before and after the spotlight of the grandstand lights,” said USHWA president Shawn Wiles. “This cadre toil in anonymity, not looking for a pat on the back, but always looking out for the best interests of their charges health and welfare. We are fortunate to have many outstanding caretakers in our industry to look after our equine athletes.”

Any caretaker working for any stable or farm in North America is eligible to be the Fair Island Farm Caretaker of the Year. All that is needed to nominate is a letter or email, 200 words minimum, from an individual or group detailing the skills and special qualities of the caretaker.

The winner will be chosen by a seven-person selection committee comprised of USHWA members, all of whom are former caretakers: Tim Bojarski (chair), Tom Charters, Moira Fanning, Dean Hoffman, Rob Pennington, Kim Rinker and Shawn Wiles.

All nomination letters and emails must be received and/or postmarked by Friday, Dec. 20, 2019, and sent to chairman Bojarski at a159star@gmail.com or mailed to Tim Bojarski, 7523 Maple Road, Akron, N.Y. 14001. (USHWA)

Gural On Six Pack, Future Of TVGs, Fall Final Four

Although the end of November, and the 2019 calendar year, are near, the Meadowlands is winding up for a big stakes weekend of racing and its historically robust winter meet.

Meadowlands chairman Jeff Gural is looking forward to this weekend’s racing for two reasons: first, the competitive racing promised by the Fall Final Four and TVG contests, and second, to see his trotter Six Pack make his final career start in the $350,000 TVG Open Trot.

“With the TVGs we’re seeing that the 3 year olds are willing to race the older horses and the mares are racing the boys,” said Gural.

The 3-year-old filly pacer Warrawee Ubeaut will take on the older mares Shartin N, Cavariit Ally and others in the TVG Mare Pace, the 3-year-old trotting colt Gimpanzee is competing in the TVG Open Trot and the 3-year-old filly Beautiful Sin is in the Mare Trot. Also, the trotting mare Manchego will take on the boys in the TVG Open Trot.

Gural said he is hopeful that the Meadowlands will be able to open for harness racing in late November next year, despite an earlier announcement that would not be possible because of a Thoroughbred meet on the main track.

“I’m hoping to have a deal worked out that we won’t have to eliminate these races,” shared Gural. “The only change we would make is we won’t have eliminations. And we don’t need eliminations any more. You can see that.”

As for Six Pack, “I would really like to see Six Pack win,” said Gural, “but it’s a tough race with Manchego and Gimpanzee and some of the others.”

Racing as Little E LLC, Gural co-owns Six Pack with Ake Svanstedt, Stall Kalmar, KnutssonTrotting and Lars Berg. The stallion is presently being syndicated and will stand at stud next year at Deo Volente Farms in New Jersey. A winner of $1,768,104, Six Pack is a son of Muscle Mass out of the Cantab Hall mare Pleasing Lady.

Gural also breeds horses under the banner of Allerage Farms and plans to support Six Pack with mares.

“He raced good at ages two, three and four, and he’s the fastest 3-year-old trotter ever (1:49.1),” noted Gural. “His record says something.”

With just a few weeks left in 2019, Gural said the Meadowlands will make money this year because of the addition of sports betting.

“Because of sports betting, the Meadowlands will operate at a profit this year. It saves the day for us,” said Gural.

“Sports betting has been tremendous for us. We did more business in October than the entire rest of the state.”

Gural said wagering on the Meadowlands’ harness races, especially export handle, has improved this year.

“I think that’s because we’ve had fuller fields this year,” he explained.—By Kathy Parker
Captain Crunch to stand stud in PA
Diamond Creek Farm is pleased to announce that award-winning pacer Captain Crunch will be standing at its Pennsylvania farm in 2020. more

McWicked to retire following Saturday’s TVG final
The richest pacing stallion in harness racing history, McWicked will make his final career start in the TVG Open Pace this Saturday at the Meadowlands. more

Dancin Yankee to stand at Ohio’s Cool Winds Farm
World champion and three-time Ohio Older Pacer of the Year Dancin Yankee p, 1:47.2 ($2,003,907) has been retired from racing and will stand for stallion service at Cool Winds Farm, Lima, Ohio, for the 2020 breeding season. more

Jimmy Freight to stand at Winbak Ontario
Winbak Farm of Ontario is proud to welcome O’Brien Award Winner, Jimmy Freight p, 2, 1:52.3s; 3, 1:48.3s; 4, 1:48.1s -’19 ($1,457,405), for the 2020 season. more

Lather Up to stand at Ohio’s Sugar Valley
Lather Up’s ownership announced on Friday the decision to stand their world champion at Sugar Valley Farm in Ohio rather than at the new Diamond Creek farm in New York. more

Courtly Choice retiring after TVG
Winbak Farm of New York is proud to announce that 2019 Canadian Pacing Derby final winner and Commodore Barry Invitational winner, Courtly Choice, p, 2, 1:53.1h; 3, 1:47.1 -’18 ($1,342,254), will be the newest addition to its impressive 2020 lineup. Courtly Choice will be retired after racing in the TVG final on Saturday at the Meadowlands. more

Tubin resigns as USTA director, Torcello to replace
U.S. Trotting Association District 8 Director Bruce Tubin has resigned his position effective immediately, and the other district directors have elected attorney Michael L. Torcello as his replacement. more

Mass. Commission recommends increase
At its Nov. 7 meeting, the Racing Division of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission recommended to the Commission that they approve a five percent increase in distributions to the state’s Standardbreds from the Race Horse Development Fund, from 60 to 65 percent, and authorize staff to take the necessary steps to implement that recommendation. more

“A Christmas Carol” at Harness Museum
After a spine-tingling performance in October of Washington Irving’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” master storyteller Jonathan Kruk returns to the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame on Thursday, Dec. 12, to bring to life “A Christmas Carol,” the classic tale of Ebenezer Scrooge by Charles Dickens. more

Lasky named winner of HHYF Service to Youth Award
Robert (Bob) Lasky has been selected as the recipient of the Harness Horse Youth Foundation's (HHYF) 2019 Service To Youth Award. He will accept his plaque at the Dan Patch Awards on Feb. 23, 2020 in Orlando. more

Ohio Colt Racing honors Western’s Last Gun
The Champaign County Fairgrounds once again was the site of the annual Ohio Colt Racing Association’s dinner and awards fete on Sunday (Nov. 17) and a fine turnout was on hand to enjoy themselves. more

Milton Smith, trainer of American Winner, dies
Milton Smith passed away on Nov. 20 at the Ohio Living Care Center in Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Smith was 77 years old and lived in Grove City, Ohio. more
Standardbred Poll
Hambleden Society/Breeders Crown Poll compiled by Harness Racing Communications for the week of November 19, 2019

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<td>288-312-313</td>
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<td>851-627-497</td>
<td>.349</td>
<td>7,554,189</td>
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Leading North American-Based Money-Winning Horses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sire Name</th>
<th>Foals</th>
<th>Starters</th>
<th>Wins</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>McWicked</td>
<td>8ph</td>
<td>16-6-3-3</td>
<td>1,017,466</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lather Up</td>
<td>4ph</td>
<td>12-8-1-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Real Cool Sam</td>
<td>3tg</td>
<td>10-9-1-1</td>
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Leading Money-Winning Drivers

<table>
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<th>Sire Name</th>
<th>Foals</th>
<th>Starters</th>
<th>Wins</th>
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<td>Tall Dark Stranger 60</td>
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<td>10,960,113</td>
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<td>Caviart Ally 38</td>
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<td>Southwind Ozzi 21</td>
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Leading Money-Winning Trainers

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<th>Sire Name</th>
<th>Foals</th>
<th>Starters</th>
<th>Wins</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muscle Hill</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>$3,707,281</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Patrick</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2,923,718</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Seven</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2,275,914</td>
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</tbody>
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Leading Money-Winning Sires

<table>
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<th>Sire Name</th>
<th>Foals</th>
<th>Starters</th>
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<th>Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Captain Treacherous</td>
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<td>Somebeachsomewhere</td>
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<td>2,854,407</td>
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<td>Bettor’s Delight</td>
<td>118</td>
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<td>American Ideal</td>
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<td>Rockingham</td>
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<td>Sweet Lou</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sportswriter</td>
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<td>Roll With Joe</td>
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<td>So Surreal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Always A Virgin</td>
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<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yankee Cruiser</td>
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<td>Rock N Roll Heaven</td>
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</table>

Harness Racing Leaders
Compiled by the USTA—through November 19, 2019 (week difference Nov. 13-19).

2YO Pacers

<table>
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<td>2,275,914</td>
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2YO Trotters

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<td>76</td>
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<td>2,275,914</td>
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</table>

USTA statistics through November 19, 2019