

# *THE BUCKEYE* Harness Horseman

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The Official Publication of the  
Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association



## **BYTHEMISSAL** Wins Breeders Crown







# CONGRATULATIONS

## 2023 Ohio Sires Stakes Champions



**CLEVER CODY**  
2-Year-Old Colt Pacing Champion



**WICKED CHARACTER**  
3-Year-Old Colt Pacing Champion



**DAISY'S STAR**  
2-Year-Old Filly Pacing Champion



**TARAPASTA**  
3-Year-Old Filly Pacing Champion



**TENNESSEE TOM**  
2-Year-Old Colt Trotting Champion



**GRAND REVIVAL**  
3-Year-Old Colt Trotting Champion



**SUGAR INSTEAD**  
2-Year-Old Filly Trotting Champion



**ROSE RUN YOLANDA**  
3-Year-Old Filly Trotting Champion



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# BYTHEMISSAL... BREEDERS CROWN CHAMPION



Bythemissal wins Breeders Crown **Photo:** Chris Tully

For the second time in three years, the Breeders Crown Open Pace belongs to an Ohioan. Bythemissal with Yannick Gingras turned on the jets down the stretch and reeled in the favorite Tattoo Artist to win by a length and a half and capture the \$600,000 Breeders Crown. Bythemissal joins Ocean Rock, which won the Open Pace in 2021, as the only Ohio-breds to win the race.

A late evening downpour turned the Hoosier Park track sloppy, but that did not bother the son of Downbytheseaside.

Tattoo Artist was sent off as the 4-5 favorite with Bythemissal the second choice at 9-5.

Off the gate, the two favorites followed Chase H Hanover and Charlie May into the first turn, pulling even with the leaders at the first quarter pole in :25.4. "There was a lot of pushing going into the first turn, but I was holding my position," said Gingras. "I wanted to follow Tattoo Artist, which I think was everyone's plan in the race."

Heading up the backstretch, Tattoo Artist with Louis Roy took control with Bythemissal in close tow, hitting the half-mile mark in :53.2.

Around the second turn, Burke's second entry, Lou's Pearlman with Tim Tetrick started his move towards the lead. The 45-1 longshot moved into second at the three-quarter pole in 1:21.4.

As the field turned for home and the long Hoosier Park stretch, Bythemissal sat third behind Tattoo Artist with Lou's Pearlman just ahead on the side. Gingras was able to find racing room and split the two mid-stretch.

With less than an eighth of a mile to go, Bythemissal caught Tattoo Artist and cruised by to win by a length and a half. Lou's Pearlman completed the Burke exacta getting up in a photo to edge Tattoo Artist in 1:48.

"That was Missal being Missal," said Burke following the race. "There is nothing that he is going to do that will surprise me."

The win was the tenth in 14 starts for Bythemissal and pushed his career earnings over the two-million-dollar mark. Bythemissal is owned by Burke Racing Stable, Eric Good, Rich Lombardo, and Weaver Brusce-mi, and was bred by Stephen Dey III.

Winning the Open Pace is special to Burke. "This win means more to us than most people because that is how we became us. We were known as guys that could only train aged pacers. Now we have branched out to other things. For us, it has always been the division that we feel is ours and that we should have to win."

Bythemissal's victory was the 1,000th win of the year for Burke and capped off a successful Breeders Crown weekend for the Burke brigade which also captured the two-year-old filly pace Breeders Crown with My Girl EJ. "We started off with a great beginning of the Breeders Crown. We lost a couple that I thought we could win, but to finish up this way is awesome." Overall, Burke had two wins, five place finishes, and two show finishes. "I'm very proud of my team and the horses," said Burke.





“That was Missal being Missal.”

Ron Burke - Trainer, Bythemissal



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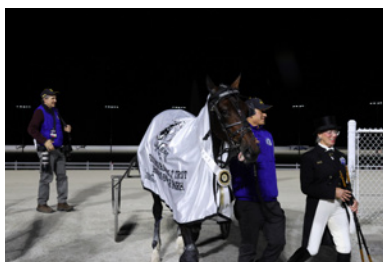
# TACTICAL APPROACH *Lands Ohioans* in **BREEDERS CROWN WINNERS CIRCLE**



Tactical Approach **Photo:** Chris Tully



**Photo:** Jenny Leslie



Tactical Approach has given his Ohio connections a year to remember, with a thrilling victory in the million-dollar Hambletonian, followed by a win in the \$450,000 Kentucky Futurity. But there was more for the son of Tactical Landing—a Breeders Crown Championship. Part owner Joe Sbrocco summed it up: “This has been so much fun.”

In the Hambletonian, Tactical Approach started outside from post position 10. It was *deja vu* as he also drew the 10 hole in the final of the Breeders Crown 3-year-old colt and gelding trot.

The Breeders Crown victory began by navigating from the second tier, Tactical Approach and Scott Zeron sat seventh in a :26.4 first quarter and :55 half mile. As the field hit the top of the backstretch, Tactical Approach started picking off rivals. Moving around the final turn, Zeron pulled Tactical Approach four wide to the middle of the lane. Tactical Approach dug deep and found another gear, grabbing the lead just before the finish line for a spectacular win in 1:50.3.

After the post-position draw, Sbrocco, of Brecksville, Ohio, wasn't feeling that confident. “I said over and over that Scotty couldn't do it again. But I was doubting him and that's not nice. He's incredible.”

With the win, Tactical Approach's sire Tactical Landing became the first sire in 22 years to have the two- and three-year-old colt trotting champion in the same year. On the first night of the Breeders Crown, Karl won the two-year-old colt and gelding trot championship.

“It's been a year to remember,” said Kevin Greenfield of Hickory Lane Farm. Greenfield is the syndicate manager for Tactical Landing. “It is nice to be a part of Breeders Crown winners--Karl last night and Tactical Approach tonight!”

The last sire to have a two- and three-year-old champion was Balanced Image in 2001, who sired two-year-old champion Duke Of York and three-year-old champion Liberty Balance.



# OHIO WELL REPRESENTED

Thirty-one horses representing Ohio connections went to the gate at the Breeders Crown at Hoosier Park. The Buckeye State was represented in all but one final, the three-year-old colt pace. When the dust settled, seven Ohio-connected horses hit the board with two champions, four runner-ups, and one third-place finish.

## Two-Year-Old Filly Trot



In the first race of the 2023 Breeders Crown, the Cinderella story of Ohio-bred Sugar Instead came to an end. The Virgil Morgan, Jr. trainee, which is owned by Joyce McClelland (Zanesville) and Larry Wills (Columbus), made a break for the first time in her career and finished ninth.

“Very disappointing,” said Morgan. “It couldn’t have looked better at the quarter. She just took a bad step around the last turn and unfortunately made a break. She had trot and the earplugs were still in. What would have happened we will never know.”

Also in the race were Sierra Girl which is owned in part by Joe Sbrocco (Brecksville) and Chaparmbro which is co-owned by M3 Racing Stable (Berlin). Sierra Girl finished sixth with Chaparmbro finishing eighth.

## Two-Year-Old Colt Pace

The only freshman colt pacer with Ohio connections was Noblesville, who was driven by Ronnie Wrenn, Jr. Noblesville, finished fifth.

## Two-Year-Old Filly Pace



Geocentric **Photo:** Dean Gillette Photography

The 2-year-old filly pace had the largest contingent of Ohio-connected horses with five. Trainer Brian Brown sent two to the gate, Geocentric and Behest. Geocentric is owned by Milton Leeman (Columbus), Alan Keith (Johnstown), James Stambaugh (Wauseon), and Sbrocco. Behest is owned in part by Michael Dean Robinson (Lewis Center), Sbrocco, and Acadia Farms (Canfield). Robinson and Robert Mondillo (Delaware) are the breeders of Behest. The third horse in the race with Ohio ownership was Peace Talks. Peace Talks is owned in part by Mondillo, while Robinson and Donald Robinson (Cardington) are the breeders.

Geocentric went into the race a perfect 9 for 9, but that’s where the streak ended. The 2-5 favorite took the lead as the field headed up the backstretch. Geocentric held the lead turning for home but faded down the stretch and finished seventh. Brown’s other entry Behest finished in tenth. Peace Talks finished in eighth.

Two other freshman filly pacers were driven by Ohioans. Wrenn drove Camerican, which finished third, while Chris Page drove Canigetouloup, and finished seventh.

## Two-Year-Old Colt Trot

The only Ohio horse in the 2-year-old colt trot was T C I, which is owned in part by Knox Services (Mt. Vernon) and Hatfield Stables (Columbus).

T C I grabbed the lead off the gate and led going to the half-mile pole. The favorite and eventual winner took command and pulled away for the win, with T C I finishing second.

“After the race, you are disappointed,” said Kris Brechler of Knox Services. “But at the end of the day, T C I made \$1.2 million dollars and he’s the richest two-year-old trotter. So yes, disappointing, but how can you be disappointed at the end of the day.”

## Three-Year-Old Colt Trot

In addition to Tactical Approach, Ohio was represented by Celebrity Bambino in the 3-year-old colt trot. Owned in part by Knox Services and a second-place finisher in the 2022 Breeders Crown, Celebrity Bambino finished sixth this year.



# AT BREEDERS CROWN

## Three-Year-Old Filly Pace

Last year Charleston, McSeaside, and Strong Poison represented the Buckeye State in the Breeders Crown 2-year-old filly pace. The trio was back again this year as 3-year-olds.

Just like last year, Ohio-bred Charleston and Strong Poison owned in part by Knox Services, were near the front of the pack turning for home. The two battled with Sylvia Hanover down the lane. At the wire, Sylvia Hanover nipped Charleston by a neck, while Strong Poison faded to fifth.

McSeaside, an Ohio-bred owned in part by Knox Services, finished eighth.

## Three-Year-Old Filly Trot

Ohio Sires Stakes champion Rose Run Yolanda was one of two Ohio-connected horses in the 3-year-old filly trot.



Rose Run Yolanda **Photo:** Conrad Photo

Owned by Greg Luther Racing (Blacklick), and bred by Rose Run Farm (Sugar creek), Rose Run Yolanda raced to the lead off the gate and held the lead going to the half giving way to Bond, who went on to win in a track record. Rose Run Yolanda, the daughter of Triumphant Caviar, which stands at Abby Stable, finished fourth.

Trainer Todd Luther said he enjoyed the experience and the outcome. "I thought we were going to get up for third, but we can't complain when you are racing mares like that. This is something you want to be a part of."

The other Ohio connection was Tony Hall, who drove Quick Stop, finishing seventh.

## Open Mare Pace

2022 Breeders Crown Open Mare Pace champion Grace Hill was back to defend her title along with stablemate Marloe Hanover. The two are trained by Virgil Morgan, Jr.

Grace Hill, the 6-5 favorite, started from the eight-post position and shot to the lead entering the first turn. She held the top spot through three-quarters, but faded, closing on the wire to finish sixth.

Marloe Hanover finished eight.

Drama Act, who was sired by Well Said, which now stands at Sugar Valley Farm, finished fifth.

## Open Mare Trot

Three of the four older mares with Ohio connections in the Open Mare Trot were bred in Ohio. Herculisa, the daughter of My MVP, was bred by Joe McLead (Del-

aware) and William Walters (Delaware) and is trained by Virgil Morgan, Jr. Refined was sired by Uncle Peter and is trained by Morgan and owned by McClelland and Wills, while Weslynn Quest was sired by Manofmanymissions.

The fourth mare in the race connected to Ohio was M-M's Dream, which is owned in part by Hillside Stables (Dundee).

Up the backstretch was a battle of Ohioans as Refined and M-M's Dream duelled for the lead with M-M's Dream taking control heading to the half.

Turning for home, M-M's Dream and Jiggy Jog battled down the stretch with Jiggy Jog getting up for the victory in a track record 1:51.1.

Refined finished fifth, Herculisa was ninth, and Weslynn Quest finished tenth.

## Open Trot

Ohio-bred It's Academic led the three Ohio-connected horses in the Open Trot. He was joined in the race by Pretender, which is owned in part by McClelland, and Chris Beaver trainee Kildare King.

It's Academic, sired by Uncle Peter, which stands at Hickory Lane Farm rallied from mid-pack to finish second, while Kildare King finished ninth and Pretender was tenth.

## Open Pace

In addition to the Open Pace champion Bythemissal, three other horses had connections to Ohio. The three, Charlie May, Chase H Hanover, and Taurasi did not fare well as they finished eighth, ninth, and tenth, respectively.

"It's exciting seeing how Ohio is represented across the board at the Breeders Crown," said Sugar Valley Farms' Joe McLead, who stands Downbytheseaside, the sire of Bythemissal, Charleston, and McSeaside. "It's a testament to the hard work that everyone puts in and it all comes down to the Breeders Crown. When you're part of the state of Ohio, it's not just one group. It's everybody as a group--a total group effort--and it is a lot of fun!"



# Champions Crowned In Ohio Sires Stakes By Greg Reinhart

The richest night of horse racing in Ohio history was highlighted by the \$400,000 Ohio Sires Stakes Scarlet and Gray Championship. Eight Scarlet Championships and eight Gray Championships, along with the Jim Ewart Memorial and the Charlie Hill Memorial offered over \$3.7 million in purses.



On the pacing side, 2-year-old colt Clever Cody was the only favorite to win as Daisy's Star (30-1), Tarapasta (87-1) and Wicked Character (10-1) lit up the tote board in the other events.



Daisy's Star

Daisy's Star kicked off the Championships for the pacers with the upset in the event for 2-year-old fillies. She blasted to the top from post eight for driver Sam Widger, put up fractions of :26.2, :55, and 1:23, and held sway in a :29.1 last quarter, defeating favored Seaside Diva (Chris Page) by a length and a quarter in a life's-best 1:52.1. Rose Run Zoey (Tyler Smith) finished third.

By Racing Hill, Daisy's Star was bred by trainer Johnson Hill Jr. and owner Brent Tartar. She has a record of 3-1-2 from six efforts, has now pocketed \$238,126, and returned \$63.20 to win.

"I was worried about the trip, getting out there, you can get hung up, and you don't know if you're going to find a spot, but she did great. I was thrilled," Tartar said after the race. "I've always believed in the filly. She's been amazing. She's shown a lot of heart and a lot of perseverance. I knew she could do it. We just had to get the right trip, and she showed she's a champion."



Clever Cody

Clever Cody (Aaron Merriman) was also a front-stepping winner. After charging to the engine from post position three, he chopped out panels of :26.4, :55.4, and 1:23.1 and repelled passing lane bids by Paris's Drag-on (Dan Noble) and Janelle Granny (Brett Miller) to score by three-quarters of a length in 1:51.1.

"It looked good, especially when Brett didn't move with Janelle Granny, said trainer Dr. Ian Moore. "I thought that was good for us, maybe. I trained him a little differently the prior start to this, and he wasn't quite as good, maybe, but this time I went back to what I had been doing before - trained him one trip on Thursday and shipped him Friday - and that seemed to be what he liked."

A colt by The Panderosa and bred by Marvin Raber, Clever Cody is owned by Clever Cody Stable. He's won five of his eight starts so far and banked \$291,050. The 3-2 favorite, he paid \$5.00 to win.



Tarapasta

Tarapasta was the longest shot on the board in the 3-year-old filly pace but fanned out widest on the final bend from last and off contested fractions of :26.1, :54.1, and 1:22.1 set by Seaside Tina (Noble) and McSeaside (Page) to win in 1:51.2, giving Merriman another victory. Cruise Alert (Brett Miller)

was the runner-up, three-quarters of a length behind Tarapasta, and Kassagi (Widger) grabbed third.

"It worked out really well. We wanted one towards the front and one towards the back, kind of see what happened with the fractions," said victorious owner Greg Luther, who had Tarapasta and Seaside Tina in the event. "There were hot fractions up front, and she came from dead last. It was absolutely awesome."

The winning filly is by Downbytheseaside, was bred by Tara Hills Stud, and trained by Todd Luther. She made her sixth trip to the winner's circle in her 24th try, boosted her earnings to \$226,000, and paid a whopping \$176.60 to win.



Wicked Character

Act Fast (Page) lived up to his name in the final for sophomore colt and gelding pacers as he took the lead away from Rockmel-ikemeanit (Noble) after a :25.3 quarter and then kept the pedal to the metal in the second quarter to put the half on the board in :52.3. That hot tempo took its toll on Act Fast past the 1:21 three-quarters, though, as he was worn down and overtaken by Burnout (Widger) then dropped out of contention. Wicked Character (Yannick Gingras) had followed Burnout all the way, however, and after angling off his cover on the final bend, Wicked Character kicked home nicely to the wire and won by 2 1/4 lengths in 1:49.4. Burnout held off Quick Trick (Smith) for the third spot.

"Sam, in the first turn, was looking for a spot, and I figured he'd be a good one to follow. They were marching right along on the front," Gingras said. "My horse felt good all the way through, and he kicked home real good in the stretch, too."



“I knew she could do it. We just had to get the right trip, and she showed she’s a champion.”

Brent Tartar – Owner, Daisy’s Star

Ron Burke trains Wicked Character, a gelding by Yankee Cruiser, for owners Winterwood Farm, Timothy Sullivan, Robert Jackson, and Tom Wilson. Wicked Character won for the eighth time in his life, has put away \$301,800 and returned \$22.60 to win.



Sugar Instead

Sugar Instead, Rose Run Yolanda, Grand Revival and Tennessee Tom were crowned as the best in the trotting divisions.

Sugar Instead (Ronnie Gillespie) capped off an undefeated run through the sires stakes with a track record 1:55 victory in the final for 2-year-old fillies. Sugar Instead was in the pocket at the :26.3 opening quarter but squeezed out between leader Possibility (Dan Noble) and a three-wide My Rory (Tony Hall) to take over the top spot past that marker. After she had control, Sugar Instead backed down the middle-half to :55.4 and 1:25.2 enroute to winning by 4 3/4 lengths from Roxanna (Aaron Merriman) and Iam Independent (Chris Page).

“To be honest, I kind of went over the race, and the only horse that I knew had a shot was Chris Page’s horse. I didn’t know who was on the outside of me, and I thought it was Chris Page, so I came right back out,” Gillespie said about his strategy early in the mile. “I wanted to be on his back or him on my back. It means a lot. This is something that I had a vision of for many years, and it’s just coming to pass.”

A daughter of Volstead bred by Elmer Miller, Sugar Instead is trained by Virgil Morgan Jr. for owners Joyce McClelland and Larry Wills. She has pocketed \$331,125 to go with her six triumphs and two runner-up finishes in eight outings and paid \$3.20 to win as the 3-5 favorite.



Rose Run Yolanda

Rose Run Yolanda (Brett Miller), who won the sires stakes final for rookie trotting fillies in 2022, defended her title this year, rallying off a second-over trip to a 1:53.3 win. Swinging Seniorita (Anthony MacDonald) cut fractions of :26.4, :56, and 1:24.4, but she was overtaken by a first-up Rose Run Yanae (Chris Page) past three-quarters, with Miller tipping out three-wide after tracking Rose Run Yanae’s cover. Rose Run Yolanda surged into the lead in the lane and would go on to defeat Rose Run Yanae by a length and a half, with Global Girl (Don Irvine Jr.) back in third.

“She’s got the pedigree, she’s got the heart, and our driver showed up. I told Brett I fired him five times in that race, but I re-hired him at the finish,” said winning owner Greg Luther.

Rose Run Yolanda, by Triumphant Caviar, is trained by Todd Luther and was bred by Rose Run Farm. Rose Run Yolanda has a record of 13-4-0 from 18 attempts, pushed her earnings to \$640,864 and returned \$2.40 to win as the 1-5 choice.



Grand Revival

Miller was right back in the winner’s circle after the final for 3-year-old colts and geldings as 24-1 Grand Revival prevailed

from first-over in 1:53.1. Positioned fourth at the :27.2 quarter and :56.2 half, Miller put Grand Revival in motion on the rim approaching that half-mile marker. Grand Revival quickly accelerated and moved up to join leader John Dutton (Chris Page) on the front-end at the 1:24.4 three-quarters, then wore that rival down around the final bend and into the lane to win by a length and a quarter. Jet Hill (Ronnie Wrenn Jr.) tracked the winner from second-over but had to settle for runner-up honors, and John Dutton came in third.

“The first time I drove this horse I moved to the front at the half, and I felt like maybe the horse didn’t like the front. His very next start, I put him on the front, and I said, ‘he definitely doesn’t like the front,’ so I said tonight we’ll just wait to make the front until the end,” Miller offered after the win.

Steve Carter trains Grand Revival, a Creatine gelding, for owners Jeff Fought Racing, Brian Carsey, and Adam Friedland. Grand Revival made his eighth appearance in the winner’s circle and has put away \$251,007 and paid \$50.60 to win.

The 2-year-old colts and geldings finished out the proceedings for the trotters, and Tennessee Tom (Page) won impressively in 1:55.1. Tennessee Tom was fifth at the :28.3 quarter set by Royal Precedent (Wrenn Jr.) and continued to watch from that position as Spaaaanzano (Aaron Merriman) brushed to the top. Racing to the :57.1 half, Page fired Tennessee Tom off the pylons first-over, and he came with a quick burst that carried him around Spaaaanzano well before the 1:26.1 three-quarters. It was all Tennessee Tom from there as he downed Spaaaanzano by 3 3/4 lengths, with E-Pass (Trevor Smith) completing the trifecta.

“I thought personally, I’m not being arrogant or whatever, but I thought that was the only way I’d lose the race, if he ran,” Page quipped post-race. “I just kind of babysat in the first turn and then let him race from there.”

*Continued on page 12*





Tennessee Tom

Tennessee Tom, by Long Tom, is conditioned by Ron Burke for owners Burke Racing Stable LLC., Weaver Bruscelli LLC., Hatfield Stables and Knox Services Inc. He's a five-time winner from eight trips behind the starting gate, has banked \$289,850 and returned \$4.60 to win as the 6-5 second choice.

The \$100,000 Gray Championships were also contested on the same night.

On the pacing side, Beautiful Lather won the 2-year-old filly pace. A daughter of Lather Up, Beautiful Lather with Aaron Merriman rallied down the stretch to win a photo by a neck in 1:53.1. Trained by Tye Loy who co-owns with David Wills, Richard Coad, and Douglas Gregory, it was the third win of the year for Beautiful Lather.

The 2-year-old colt Gray Championship went to Racing Rebel. The Racing Hill colt won for the second time as Sam Widger shot down the passing lane to win by a neck in 1:53.2. Racing Rebel is trained by Dan O'Mara and is owned by Marjorie Polhamus.

Stormy Serena rallied from the back to win the 3-year-old filly pace. Peter Wrenn took the daughter of Fear The Dragon four wide around the final turn and charged down the lane to win in 1:52.3. Trained by Melanie Wrenn and owned by Emerald Highlands Farm, Dolne Farm Service LLC, and Wrenn Racing LLC, it was the filly's fourth win of the year.

Downbytheseaside gelding Ants Marching won the 3-year-old colt pace in 1:49.4 for driver Dexter Dunn, co-owner/trainer Nancy Takter, and co-owners Howard Taylor, Joe McLead, and Billy Walters. It was the fourth win of the year for Ants Marching.

Hot Tea, a 2-year-old daughter of Enterprise, kicked off the night winning the 2-year-old filly trot Gray Championship. Trained by Virgil Morgan Jr., Hot Tea with Tyler Smith grabbed the lead heading to the half-mile

mark, opened up a three-length lead, and then held on to win in 1:57.1. Owned by Joyce McClelland, it was the second win of the season for Hot Tea.

The 2-year-old colt trot championship went to Hung Over. The Creatine colt cruised to a two-length victory in 1:56.2 for driver Dan Noble. Trained by Bob Stewart and co-owned by Bluestone Farms LLC. and Lynda Stewart, Hung Over won for the fourth time in eight starts.

Doc's Boo Boo claimed the 3-year-old filly trot championship. Jeff Nisonger and the Downbytheseaside trotter took the pocket trip and shot down the passing lane, then captured a three-horse photo for the win in 1:56.2. Doc's Boo Boo won for the seventh time this year in 12 starts for trainer Mark Winters and owner Jr Stable.

The 3-year-old colt trot title went to Bidenurtime and driver-trainer Sandy Beatty. Bidenurtime took control at the half-mile mark and cruised to his ninth win of the year in 1:55.2. The Creatine gelding is owned by Roger Wallace and Larry Riffe.

## Track Record Highlights Buckeye Stallion Series Finals

A track record performance by Justasiam AS and two wins for trainer Melby Ober Jr. highlighted the 2023 Buckeye Stallion Series finals at Hollywood Dayton Raceway.

### Two-Year-Old Filly Trot



In the 2-year-old filly trot final, Justasiam AS with Tony Hall was sixth after the first quarter, fought through traffic up the back stretch, and finally found racing room around the final turn. Hall pulled the

daughter of Lionhunter three-wide at the top of the stretch and drove down the line to win in 1:54.4, a new track record for freshman filly trotter. Justasiam AS is trained by Anette Lorentzon and owned by ACL Stuteri AB. It was the filly's fourth win in nine starts and raised her earnings to \$94,630. Jurassic Hattie finished second with Hot Tea third.

### Two-Year-Old Colt Trot



The 2-year-old colt trot title went to Be Not Beastly. Be Not Beastly and Chris Lems sat patiently in third until the top of the stretch, when Lems dipped the son of What The Hill to the inside

and charged to the line winning by a half-length in 1:57.1. It was the second win of the year for the Scott Cox trainee. Owned by Michael Soehnlén, Be Not Beastly raised his earnings to \$69,255. Bob Da Bomber was second and Irresistible was third.



### Two-Year-Old Filly Pace



Naked On A Hill had to rally from the back of the pack to claim the 2-year-old filly pacing title. Jeff Nisonger took the Nob Hill High filly to the lead heading to three-quarters and

held off the 1/5 favorite Illegal down the stretch to win by a head in 1:52.4. Naked On A Hill has hit the board in all ten starts, winning five. Trained by Mark Winters and owned by Dennis Shaner, Naked On A Hill has earned \$81,454. Fear Of Moonlight was third.

### Two-Year-Old Colt Pace



Melby Ober Jr. and Matt Rowe teamed up to win the 2-year-old colt pace with homebred Well That's Marky. Well That's Marky and Chris Page grabbed the lead

heading the half-mile and held on down the stretch to win by a nose in a photo with Seeuatthesmoke in 1:53.2. The Well Said gelding has hit the board in nine of ten races this year, winning four. Well That's Marky has now earned \$82,060 this year. Finishing third was Dragon You Along.

### Three-Year-Old Filly Trot



The 3-year-old filly trot BSS title went to Vintage and Sam Widger. Widger guided the Creatine filly to the lead and never looked back cruising to a three-length

gate-to-wire win in 1:55.2. It was the fourth win in 12 starts for Vintage. Trained by John Ryan Melsheimer and owned by Joyce McClelland and Mel Rose Stable, Vintage has earned \$78,865 this year. Waddupgee was second with Golden Endeavor finishing third.

### Three-Year-Old Colt Trot



Senterprise and Dan Noble rallied from three-lengths back around the final turn and reeled in Asian Zing late in the stretch to win by half a length in 1:54.4 to claim

the 3-year-old trotting championship. It was the fifth win in 18 starts for the son of Enterprise. Unraced as a two-year-old, Senterprise is trained by Christi Noble and owned by Dennis Owens, Norman Rae Racing, and James Morris. With the win, Senterprise has earned \$104,315 this year. Long Tom Jess finished third.

### Three-Year-Old Filly Pace



It was another homebred that brought home the 3-year-old pacing championship for Ober Jr. and Rowe. Beautiful Seaside with Brett Miller grabbed the lead just past the first quarter and

held off a late rally from Stormy Serena to win in 1:50.3. It was the tenth win of the year for the daughter of Downbytheseaside. She has earned \$134,210 this year. Onederfulbeach finished in third.

### Three-Year-Old Colt Pace



In the 3-year-old colt pace, Litenin-gonthebeach with Dexter Dun raced to the lead just past the quarter and held off a hard-charging Don'ttouchm-truck at the wire to win by nose in

1:50.2. Brian Brown trains Litenin-gonthebeach for owners Country Club Acres Joe, Sbrocco, Acadia Farms, and Rich Lombardo. It was the tenth win in 18 starts for the son of Downbytheseaside who has earned \$168,850. Trooper L was third.



# MGM Northfield Park Hosts Buckeye Stallion Series Consolations

The 2023 Buckeye Stallion Series closed with the \$25,000 Consolations.



Kaminari **Photo:** Casalinova Photography

Trainer Christopher Beaver wasted no time getting on the board in BSS Consolations, as his three entries took win, place, and show in the 2-year-old filly trot. Kaminari with Aaron Merriman went gate-to-wire to win by a neck in 2:01.3. Osaka Hall finished second with Maxine's Hill third. Kaminari is owned by Sandra Burnett and Beaver. It was the fourth win of the year for Kaminari who has earned \$43,656.



Lady Bridgerton **Photo:** Casalinova Photography

There were fireworks in the 2-year-old pacing fillies division as Lady Bridgerton with Chris Page gunned down favorite, I'm A Beach Lady and Mike Wilder in the shadow of the wire. I'm A Beach Lady rocketed off the wings and quickly opened up a four-length lead. She held the lead until passed by Lady Bridgerton at the wire, winning in 1:56.4. It was the third victory of the year for Lady Bridgerton. The fil-

ly pushed her earnings to \$34,598 with the win. She is owned by Kent Walker, Travis Kelly, Benjamin Jamison, and Curt Carey. A Special Dance was third.

Next up were the freshman trotting colts. Mr WWC and Elliott Deaton swung wide around the final turn and rallied down the stretch to catch heavy favorite Sir Maverick at the wire to win by a neck in 2:00.1. Trained by Wes Hershberger and owned by Callam Racing LLC, the son of Long Tom increased his earnings to \$31,953 with his second win of the year. Runs The Wind finished third.

Steve Carter had the top two finishers in the 2-year-old colt pacing division. Bronx Drifter and Austin Hanners went to the lead and never looked back, winning in 1:57. Stablemate All Lathered Up with Merriman was three lengths back in second edging out Cheyenne Tuff. It was the eighth win in 17 starts for Bronx Drifter who is owned by Peggy Carter and Sheila Hummel.

Team TheStable.ca got on the board next as Coupe Deville and Anthony MacDonald got anything but a perfect trip but still managed to score a victory in the BSS consolation for 3-year-old trotting fillies. The 1-2 favorite was last at the half-mile and parked three-wide in seventh entering the final turn. Coupe Deville stormed off the final turn and charged down the lane to win by 2-3/4 lengths in 2:01.1. It was the fifth win of the year for the daughter of Uncle Peter. Bee Stormin finished second with Rose Run Yancee third.

Carter picked up his second consolation win of the night with 3-year-old pacing filly Somwherunderheavn. The Ohio Breeders Championship winner grabbed the lead at the quarter pole and wouldn't give it up, winning in 1:55. Owned by Jeff Fought Racing, Brian Carsey, Adam Friedland, and Peggy Carter, it was the seventh win of the year for Somwherunderheavn. AVF Claire was second with Sectionlinesea-side finishing third.

Republic Return with Ronnie Wrenn Jr. earned his fourth victory of the year winning the 3-year-old colt trotting consolation. Wrenn took the Global Republic S gelding to the inside down the stretch and passed Stumpy to win by a length in 2:00. Rosy Weaver trains and co-owns Republic Return with Heartland Acres. Covid Cartel was third.

The final consolation of the night went to Colin Your Bluff for owner and trainer Joe Lucas in the 3-year-old colt pace. Colin Your Bluff with Elliott Deaton grabbed the lead at the top of the stretch and dug deep when the money was down to win by three-quarters of a length in 1:54.3. It was the fourth win of the year for the son of Downbytheseaside. Martins Millions was second with Tan Man third.

Edited Northfield Release



## WRENN JR. CAPTURES THREE OHIO FAIR CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Ohio Fair racing season officially closed at MGM Northfield Park with Ronnie Wrenn Jr. stealing the show as he captured three of the \$50,000 Fair Championships.

Wrenn won the first of the three titles when he drove Dance In Style to a six-length gate-to-wire victory in the 2-year-old colt pace in 1:56.3. The son of Dancin Yankee won for the 10th time in 15 starts for trainer Steve Novak. Owned by Gerald Mijal, Dance In Style raised his earnings this year to \$67,996. Dragon Medicine finished second with Stonebridge Drago third.



In the 2-year-old colt trot, Wrenn and Smokeitsteady grabbed the lead deep in the stretch nosing out Sir Cactus Jax at the wire to win in 2:02.3. It was the seventh win in 13 starts for the Volstead gelding. Tye Loy trains and co-owns Smokeitsteady with Roger Morlock. The win raised Smokeitsteady's earnings to \$51,892. Grover Hill finished fourth but was placed third.

Wrenn made it three in a row as he fired Lady With No Fear off the gate from the rail grabbing the lead and never looking back to win the 3-year-old filly pace championship by two lengths in a lifetime best of 1:54.2 for trainer Sandra Hennessey. Lady With No Fear won for the eighth time in 21 starts. Owned by Hennessey and Paula Sugars, the Fear The Dragon filly raised her lifetime earnings to \$86,222. Tre Rock was second with Hangon Abigail third.

The first championship of the night went to Legend N Cress and Austin Hanners. Hanners went gate to wire with the daughter of Bit Of A Legend N to win the 2-year-old filly pace. The 2-5 favorite was never challenged winning by two-lengths in 1:57.3 for trainer Steve Carter. Legend N Cress is owned by Jacob Mossbarger, Ben Foor, Corey Martin, and Matthew Kemper. She has earned \$65,447 this year. Western Time finished second with Vintage Queen finishing third.



In the 2-year filly trot Desert Hayz and Home Run Queen battled for the last half-mile before Desert Hayz grabbed the lead in the stretch, winning by a length in 2:02.2 equaling her lifetime best. It was the seventh win in 14 starts for the Greg Bateson trainee who also drives the daughter of Uncle Peter. Bateson co-owns Desert Hayz with the Hayter Stable. Desert Hayz has earned \$50,801 this year. Phyllis L finished third.

Frantastic L and Hank LeVan grabbed the early lead and held off a late charge from Aerogem to win the 3-year-old filly trotting championship in 1:58. Trained by LeVan and owned by the Levan Stables, Darmofal Racing, Edward Perry, and Megan LeVan, it was the 12th win of the year for the Team Six filly. Frantastic L raised her lifetime earnings to \$160,878 with the win. Sugarloaf finished third.



Fearhelue and Elson Miller were seventh at the three-quarter pole and went four-wide around the final turn firing down the line to win a four-horse photo and the 3-year-old colt pacing title in 1:54.1. It was the sixth win of the year for the Fear The Dragon gelding. Owned and trained by Miller, Fearhelue has earned \$52,385 this year. Tennessee Smooth was second with Flyin Fitz third.



In the final championship of the night, the 3-year-old colt trot, Ultra Uncle with Ken Holliday took the pocket trip, reeling in Head Honcho Bo in deep stretch to win by a length in 1:58.2. Owned and trained by Rory Moore, the Uncle Peter colt has won seven of 18 races this year, earning \$60,942 this year. Long Time Winning was third.

Photos: Michael Carter

## NISONGER AND CLEGG TAKE TOP FAIR HONORS



Jeff Nisonger and Betty Clegg have been crowned King and Queen of the fairs. Nisonger led all drivers in 2023 winning 90 races this summer. Nisonger was second in 2022. Clegg was the top trainer across the four fair circuits as she also recorded 61 wins.

### Drivers

Jeff Nisonger	90
Drew Neill	58
Nick Clegg	56

### Trainers

Betty Clegg	61
Hank Le Van	47
Rosy Weaver	43



# OCRA HONORS TOP PERFORMERS

The Ohio Colt Racing Association held its 90th annual banquet to honor the circuit's top performers at Hollywood Gaming Dayton Raceway.

About 100 people gathered as awards were presented to the top two- and three-year-old divisional winners, the two-year-old winners of the Parshall Memorial Stakes, and the presentation of the Dr. H.D. Schoonover Award.



Dr. Robert Schwartz presents Greg Smith the trophy for 2-year-old colt pacing champion Rock The Hill.

The top 2-year-old pacing colt was Rock The Hill. The son of Racing Hill hit the board in 11 of 13 races, winning ten. Owned and trained by Greg Smith, Rock The Hill earned \$29,951 in 2023.

Flash Of Fame was honored as the top freshman trotting colt. Owned and trained by Roger Hughes, Jr., the son of Uncle Peter won five of 16 races earning \$29,114.

The OCRA's top 2-year-old pacing filly was This Is The Day. This Is The Day won half of her 16 races for Powerplay Racing 87 and trainer James Day. The daughter of Fear The Dragon earned \$27,867.

The David Meyer trainee Sososorry was the top 2-year-old filly trotter. The Team Six filly is owned by Meyer and Kelly Meyer. Sososorry hit the board in 14 of 15 races, winning five, finishing second three times and third six times. She bankrolled \$26,349.



Team Le Van received the trophy for the top 3-year-old colt pacer Trooper L.

The three-year-old division was led by colt pacer Trooper L. Trained by Hank Le Van, Trooper L made 36 starts, winning nine times and earning \$78,887. The Racing Hill gelding is owned by Le Van Stables, Darmofal Racing, and Megan Le Van.



OCRA President Dr. Robert Schwartz presents Mark Winters (R) the award for the top trainer in the OCRA

Head Honcho Bo was the top sophomore trotting colt. Head Honcho Bo was owned by Bob Buerger and trained by Mark Winters until he was sold to Greg Luther Racing at the end of September. In 2023, Head Honcho Bo won seven of 25 races and earned \$66,628.

The Well Said filly Wellsaid Evelyana took home the honors as the top 3-year-old pacing filly. Phil Groves trains and co-owns Wellsaid Evelyana with Sharon Koester. Wellsaid Evelyana hit the board in 20 of 30 races, winning ten and earning \$64,923.

Rounding out the awards for the 3-year-olds was filly trotter Crazy But Classy. Crazy But Classy made 26 starts and won six races, sporting \$43,733 in earnings. Pat Melloy Jr. trains and co-owns the Nothing But Class filly with Lisa Gosselin.

The Ohio Colt Racing Association sponsors the Dr. H.M. Parshall Memorial Stakes held at the Darke County Fair. Named in memory of "Doc" Parshall, the Stakes honor the two-time Hambletonian winning trainer. The fastest division winner is crowned with the overall title.

In 2023, both the 2-year-old Parshall Stakes winners and one of the three-year-old winners were in the Greg Luther Racing barn. Stardust Volo took the Parshall Futurity for 2-year-old trotters while Swaggy Cal took the pacing honors. In the three-year-old pacing division, it was Tarapasta taking home the trophy. Tarapasta set a news stakes record, winning in 1:53.1. Todd Luther trains the three horses.

The 3-year-old Parshall Stakes winner was Energysource. Doug Rideout trains Energy Source for owner William Hartt.

The honorees took home handsome trophies made and presented by Ann & Ray Lufkin.

Toureg Seelster was honored as the Signature Series top pacing point-earner. Toureg Seelster hit the board in 15 Signature Series races, winning nine.





Mike Woebkenberg is honored as the recipient of the Dr. H.D. Schoonover Award

Mike Woebkenberg received the Dr. H.D. Schoonover Award, which is presented to a lover of Ohio harness racing with the optimism, passion, and patience for teaching, participating in, and thoroughly enjoying the sport, at the county fair level in particular.

This Schoonover Award originated in the North Central Ohio Colt Stakes circuit in 2001 and passed from there to the Western Ohio Colt Racing Association and now resides with the OCRA.

The top driver in the OCRA this year was Jeff Nisonger, while Mark Winters took home the top trainer title. Nisonger won 67 races, while Winters trained 27 winners.

**Photos:** Conrad Photo

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#### January 19-21

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#### January 10-14

Ohio RV show - IX Center

#### January 19-21 & January 24-28

Cincinnati Boat, Sport & Travel show - Duke Energy Center

#### January 13 and 14

Tri State Outdoor Show - Lawrenceburg, IN  
Lawrenceburg Event Center

#### January 24-28

Louisville Boat, RV and Sport Show - Kentucky Exposition Center

#### January 18-21

Cleveland Boat Show - IX Center

#### January 26-28

New York Sportsmen Expo - Syracuse, NY Exposition Center

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# Neill, Beaver, Miller Earn OFC Honors

The Ohio Fair Racing Conference wrapped up the season with its 10th annual banquet held at the Ward L. Adams American Legion Post in Napoleon. Awards were presented to the divisional champions and leading drivers and trainers.

Drew Neill repeated as the top driver in the circuit. Neill won 31 races in 2022 and topped that by winning 47 races in 2023.

The top trainer in the OFRC this year was Chris Beaver. Beaver won 31 races and claimed the award for the seventh time in the past nine years.

The 2023 Ladies Driving Series title went to Devan Miller. Miller won eight races in the series this year.



The trophy for three-year-old filly trot champion went to Hydraulic Hazel.

Hydraulic Hazel was the top 3-year-old trotting filly. The daughter of Stormin Normand

won 14 out of 16 races and earned \$62,539 for her owners Ernest Ayers and Ellen Belle-more.



OHHA Assistant Director Ayers Ratliff Jr. presents Steve Bateson the trophy for 3-year-old colt trot champion Entered To Win

The top 3-year-old colt trotter was Entered To Win. Owned by Steve Bateson and Harold J. Moore, Entered To Win hit the board in 11 of 13 races, winning two. He earned \$21,239 in 2023.

Lady With No Fear earned the honor as the top sophomore pacing filly. Lady With No Fear finished first or second 17 times in 25 starts. Sandra Hennessey and Paula Sugars own Lady With No Fear. The Fear The Drag-on filly won \$77,511 this year.

In the 3-year-old colt pacing division, Why Tomorrow Ray took home the top honor. The

Racing Hill gelding won ten of 19 races and earned \$43,721 for owner Ted Boschma.

The top freshman filly trotter in the OFRC is Desert Hayz. Owned by Hayter Stables LLC and Greg Bateson, Desert Hayz hit the board 12 times, winning seven of her 14 races. The daughter of Uncle Peter earned \$50,801 this year.

Grover Hill is the top 2-year-old colt trotter in the conference. Sean McGhee owns the What The Hill gelding. Grover Hill won six of 14 races, earning \$34,109 in 2023.

On the pacing side of the ledger, A Bit Crazy is the 2-year-old filly pace honoree. A Bit Crazy, the daughter of Bit Of A Legend N, won nine of ten races, earning \$25,589 for owners Stephen N. Reis and J&R Racing.

Rounding out the divisional winners is 2-year-old colt pacers Dance In Style. Owned by Gerald Mijal, Dance In Style won ten of 15 races with two second-place finishes. The son of Dancin Yankee earned \$67,996 in 2023.

Stoney Ridgetop was honored as the top Signature Series trotter. Stoney Ridgetop hit the board in eight Signature Series races, winning four.

**Photos:** Heidi Ratliff

## It's Time to Order Your 2024 Copy of the Huff's National Fair Directory

If you would like to order a copy of the 2024 edition, send \$10 per copy (includes postage & handling) to:

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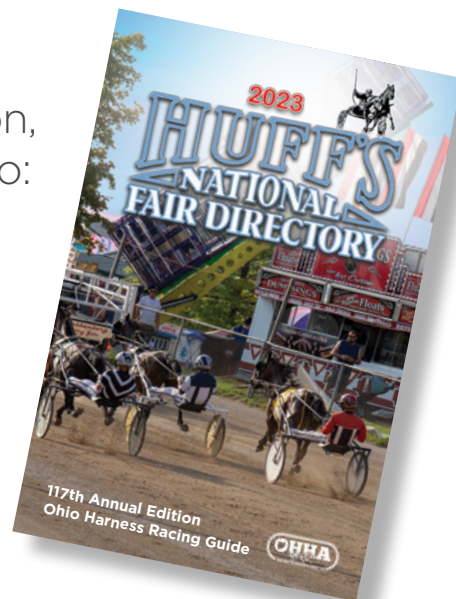
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# Southern Valley Colt Circuit Honors Top Performers

The Southern Valley Colt Circuit honored the top horses, drivers, and trainers at their annual banquet in Zanesville.

The top 2-year-old filly trotter in the Southern Valley Colt Circuit was Miss Clementine. Owned by Casey Clemmens and trained by Eric Nesselroad, Miss Clementine won six races on the circuit to lead all 2-year-olds.

Peterbilts Bro was named the top 2-year-old colt trotter. Peterbilts Bro won four times on the circuit for trainer Fred Morgan Jr. and owner John Holman.

Taking home the honors as the top freshman filly pacer was QDancer. Owned by Susan Sickle and then by Steven Butler and Eric Butler, QDancer won three times. She is trained by Ronnie Gillespie.

Rounding out the top 2-year-olds is colt pacer Dragon Medicine. Owned by Richard Owings and trained by Earl Owings, Dragon Medicine was a three-time winner.

The leading 3-year-old was six-time winner Hello In There. The filly pacer is owned by Ed Teehey and trained by Ed Rider.

VH Volt was the top sophomore pacing colt. Tim VanHorn owns and trains the five-time winner.

CV's Serena was also a five-time winner. The 3-year-old filly trotter is owned by Richard Owings and trained by Earl Owings.

Long Time Winning led the 2-year-old colt trotters with two wins. The Rosy Weaver trainee is owned by Weaver and Heartland Acres.



Alex Hawk



Ronnie Gillespie

Alex Hawk was honored with the Fred McVicker Driving Award for the most wins in the Southern Valley. Hawk won 29 races. Ronnie Gillespie was second with 25 wins. Gillespie was honored with the Sid Spencer Driving Award for most points. He edged out Hawk for the top honor in that category.

The Terry Van Rhoden Training Award, which is determined by UTRS, went to Gillespie with a .561 rating. VanHorn was second with a .552 rating.



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# OHHA Annual Awards Banquet

2022 Horse of the Year Bythemissal



Join us to celebrate 2023 at the **OHHA Annual Awards Banquet** on **Saturday, January 13, 2024** at the Marriott Columbus OSU. The OHHA member meeting and Charity Luncheon are also planned that afternoon.

- Reservations and payment for tickets for the banquet must be at the OHHA office by Tuesday, January 2, 2024.
- Tickets are \$30 each and can be picked up at the Banquet Reservation Table. No tickets will be sold at the door.
- There will be reserved tables available. If you would like to reserve a table, please indicate that and the name to be displayed on the table on your reservation form. Reservation for a reserved table is 8 guests.

### January 13, 2024 Agenda

- 11:30 a.m. Charity Luncheon
- 1:00 p.m. OHHA Annual Membership Meeting
- 2:00 p.m. USTA District 1 Annual Meeting
- 4:00 p.m. Cocktail Hour - Cash Bar
- 5:00 p.m. Dinner Seating
- 5:30 p.m. OHHA Annual Awards Banquet
- 9:00 p.m. After Party with cash bar

Room reservations must be made by January 2, 2024 by calling (614) 477-9777. Use code OHHN to get our discounted rate of \$140 or book via the reservation link on the OHHA website home page or by going to <https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1687552200705&key=GRP&app=resvlink>.



## Banquet Reservation Form

Tickets are \$30 each. Reservation and payment must be received by the OHHA office by January 2, 2024.

Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association  
2237 Sonora Drive  
Grove City, OH 43123

Name of Guest(s) & Meal Preference:  
(Please note beside name B - Beef, C - Chicken, or V - Vegetarian)

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Reserve your own table? Y or N

Tables can be reserved for 8 guests only per table. Please let your guests know the name on the table that is reserved.

Table Reservation Name.

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Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Charity Luncheon

Please RSVP if you would like to attend. The luncheon is free of charge.

Attendees: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please include email)

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# *Be There!*

BY ROGER E. HUSTON



For a period of eight years, on Saturday nights I would leave my home in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, and drive 363 miles to Nichols, New York, which is on the border of Pennsylvania and New York, to announce races on Sunday and Monday at a race-track that employed my daughter, Nevele, and her husband, Dustin Ross.

Nevele worked in the marketing department and Dustin in the race office at the new venture, the refurbished Tioga Downs.

They have since relocated to Canonsburg, but during their time at Tioga, we developed close ties with many track employees, fans who attended the races, and the many dedicated horsemen in the Southern tier of New York State.

On the morning of November 9th, we first heard the news of a fire in Barn F and that 18 horses had died in the blaze. That number increased in a few hours to 30. We also heard that five trainers had lost everything including equipment.

As horrific as the news of the fire and loss of 30 horses was the shocking news that this was a case of arson and that a suspect was in custody. That individual has since been charged with arson.

In my 64 years in the business, I can remember many fires that have taken our beloved horses due to a number of different causes, but this is a first. Arson? It is so hard to fathom that an individual could do this.

That afternoon, a GoFundMe account was established with a goal of \$50,000 to benefit the horsemen who were affected by this tragedy. It was also announced that track owner, Jeff Gural, would match the first \$100,000. Within hours, 80 individuals had donated more than \$50,000. The fund has since raised nearly \$300,000. It should be mentioned that there are other GoFundMe accounts that have been established as well.

There have been many efforts of all sizes to raise money for this cause, including individuals making bracelets and tee shirts to benefit those involved. Breeding farms and individual breeders donated breeding to their stallions which were auctioned on OnGait.com and raised over \$300,000.

Trainer Rick Bertrand of California made a trip to Tioga Downs with an 8-horse trailer, stopping along the way to pick up equipment donations to help these trainers get back in the business.

I am sure that the trainers and owners greatly appreciate the money and equipment being donated, but the heartache they are experiencing will always live on. Our thoughts and prayers are with those individuals. Tioga Strong.

**Be There!**



# 20 questions with **Ryan Miller**

## **What is your first recollection of harness racing as a youngster?**

Probably going to the Paulding and Van Wert County Fairs with my grandparents when I was about four or five years old. I was sold on it right then and there. I didn't know how I was going to get involved with the sport, but I was going to figure it out.

## **Were your parents or grandparents involved in harness racing?**

To be honest, not really. My parents didn't care for it at all. My grandparents owned and had some broodmares. They were big supporters of mine from the beginning.

## **Did you play any sports growing up?**

I did everything. I played varsity basketball; I ran track and cross country. I played everything I could growing up.

## **Did you go to college?**

I attended Morrisville State College and got a four-year education in Equine Science with a business management degree, and I met my wife there.

## **Did you want to be a driver or a trainer?**

Most people get into the sport wanting to be a driver. That's what I wanted to do but I realized I didn't have a knack for it. Some people have it, and some don't. I fell in love with training youngsters when I went to work for Ray Schnittker. Originally, I thought I was going to train racehorses, but the more I trained yearlings and two-year-olds, that's what hooked me.

## **You started driving in 2007 and training in 2009. Do you remember May 30, 2009?**

That was my first driving and training win, Tabo's Tyke. I remember it well.

## **What made you cut back on driving?**

I haven't completely quit driving; I still drive in the first qualifiers and their first start to teach some of the ornery babies lessons they need. I want to get the best out of my horses for myself and my owners' sake. Some people have a knack for getting them to go fast; that's something I don't have. I wish I did.

## **Does one win as a trainer stand out?**

My first state fair win with Magic Vacation. I was just starting on my own and he got me

off on the right track. That was a neat win. And the most recent one with Rose Run Zoey in Delaware. She won the Ohio Breeders Championship and equaled a track record. I think she will be a very special filly next year as a three-year-old.

## **Do you prefer Trotters or Pacers?**

I don't. I tend to have more pacing fillies. We have good luck with them. I used to shy away from them, but recently we are getting along with them. I love trotters, but it's very rare I get them. I have owners that don't have the patience for them.

## **Is your stable made up of just two- and three-year-olds?**

We do have a few older horses. I'll keep a three-year-old here and there. My old man of the barn is ten-year-old Docdor Friskie, he's been our bread and butter for us. He's made over half a million. We'll keep a few other horses around. I'm transitioning to having a broodmare band. We have three broodmares and adding to it. I'm intrigued by that idea.

## **You recently did a show day at the fairgrounds of your young horses. How did that go?**

It went well. I took the idea from TheStable.ca and Anthony MacDonald. I think he is on to something there. I like the idea of bringing new people into the sport where they don't have to spend a fortune and they can buy a lot of shares. I'm a huge advocate of getting new people going.

## **TheStable.ca has over 900 owners worldwide. Could you handle that?**

I absolutely do not want to handle that. I like the small group of people we have. I try to bring in people that are fun and want to go to the races. I have a really great group of owners. I could expand a little, but I don't need to get into 150 horses and 900 owners.

## **How do people get involved with the Miller Stable?**

I travel with my horses as much as possible, so I am out and about. I am very hands on, so I am there a lot. Just come up and say hi. I am on Facebook. I work with Jessica Schroeder of Horseplay Racing, and she has four or five horses with me. You can get my number from her. I want people around to enjoy what I get to enjoy every day.



Ryan Miller

## **Outside of harness racing do you have a favorite sport?**

I love every sport. Probably football, but I love basketball, baseball, and hockey. I go to a ton of minor-league hockey games. I just love competition.

## **What do you do to relax?**

If I'm taking a vacation, I will go to Naples, Florida. We have family down there. I love just to hang out with my four- and seven-year-old sons. They are the joy of my life. I enjoy hanging out with them.

## **What is your favorite food?**

I don't shy away from food. I like all kinds of food. I love a good steak.

## **Is there a food you would never eat?**

Mushrooms, I can't stand mushrooms. I joke with people that I don't trust people that eat mushrooms. They gross me out.

## **Do you have a favorite television show?**

Typically sports, but if it's not sports it's Big Bang Theory or Two and A Half Men. Those two are classics in my book. I love a good comedy.

## **What was the last movie you watched?**

It might have been Hotel Transylvania with my boys.

## **What is the number one thing on your bucket list?**

Reaching the pinnacle of harness racing would be on my bucket list. Who wouldn't want to win the Little Brown Jug or Jugette? If not that, I just want to travel the world. I adore the world. I think it is fascinating what is out there. I just haven't been able to see much of it.



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## BREEDERS CROWN No. 41 FOR FOALS OF 2025

TOTAL ESTIMATED VALUE – \$7,000,000

**STALLION NOMINATION FEE:** Due and payable Jan. 15, 2024, in the amount of the advertised stud fee for the 2024 breeding season (\$500 U.S. funds minimum,) plus an additional surcharge as indicated below, provided, however, that for first-year stallions placed in commercial service (which would not include test breedings) after Jan.15, the nomination must be paid within 60 days after the stallion first breeds a mare. In no event will any stallion nomination fee be accepted after Dec. 31, 2024. The Hambletonian Society reserves the right to determine the stallion nomination fee of those stallions whose 2024 service is advertised as private treaty, or if the amount of the fee is not advertised. This payment covers 2024 matings (foals of 2025).

In addition to the 2024 service fee, the amount of the stallion nomination fee must include a surcharge as follows:

a) For stallions that stand for a fee from US\$3,000 to \$5,999 (or \$4,107.45CAD (Canadian Dollars) to \$8,213.53 CAD), an additional amount equal to 40% of 2024 service fee must be paid;

b) For stallions that stand for a fee from US\$6,000 to \$9,999 (or \$8,214.90 CAD to \$13,690.13 CAD), an additional amount equal to 75% of 2024 service fee must be paid;

c) For stallions that stand for a fee of US\$10,000 (\$13,691.50 CAD), or more, an additional amount equal to 200% of 2024 service fee must be paid.

For stallions that stand for a service fee of less than US\$3,000 (or \$4,107.45 CAD), no additional surcharge is necessary for nomination.

*Note: To determine the surcharge in other than U.S. funds, the November 14, 2023 exchange rate is used; a rate of \$1.37 CAD per US\$.*

Stallion nominations for other than first-year stallions that are postmarked after January 15, 2024, but on or before Dec. 31, 2024, will be accepted upon payment of an additional penalty amount equal to 50% of the above stallion nomination fee (including the above surcharge). Likewise, stallion nominations for first-year stallions that are postmarked after the above 60-day deadline, but on or before Dec. 31, 2024, will be accepted upon payment of an additional amount equal to 50% of the above stallion nomination fee (including the above surcharge).

Any payment on a stallion that does not commercially conceive a foal or breed a mare by any means during the entire 2024 breeding season may be refunded, provided, however, that it shall be the obligation of the stallion nominator to notify the Society in writing of any request for refund by Dec. 31, 2024.

Moreover, if a nominated stallion does not breed more than twenty (20) mares in 2024 or produce more than fifteen (15) registered foals in 2025, up to 50% of the stallion nomination fee may be refunded, provided, however, that it shall be the obligation of the stallion nominator to notify the Society in writing of any request for adjustment by Dec. 31, 2024 (mares bred) or by Dec. 31, 2025 (registered foals). No stallion nomination fee will be reduced to less than \$500.00 U.S. funds.

Any payment on a North American stallion that has been nominated by Jan. 15, 2024, and is subsequently exported prior to Feb.15, 2024 and that does not commercially breed a mare in North America by any means during the entire 2024 breeding season, may be refunded, provided, however, that it shall be the obligation of the stallion nominator to notify the Society in writing of any request for refund by Dec. 31, 2024. With the exception of supplemental nominations or declarations as provided in the conditions, foals of 2025 by a stallion for which the above nomination fee has been refunded will be ineligible to the Breeders Crown unless an additional amount equal to the amount of the refund is paid.

*Except as provided above, stallion nomination fees shall not be refunded.*

Stallion payments may be made in the local currency of the nation in which the stallion stands, or in equivalent U.S. funds (\$500 U.S. funds minimum).

Conditions for nominating yearlings will be published in the *USTA Stakes & Futurities Nomination Book*. Specific conditions for the races for which these foals are eligible will be published in the *USTA Stakes Guide* in the year of the races. The Hambletonian Society reserves the right to add to, amend or delete the conditions of all or any part of the Breeders Crown program, without liability. *For more information contact: The Hambletonian Society at (609)371-2211 or www.hambletonian.com*

### BREEDERS CROWN STALLION No. 41 NOMINATION BLANK

Name of Stallion \_\_\_\_\_ Age/Foal of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024 Service Fee \_\_\_\_\_

Sire \_\_\_\_\_ Dam \_\_\_\_\_ Sire of Dam \_\_\_\_\_

Farm \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_

Owner(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please check [√]: [ ] In-production stallion (by Jan. 15, 2024) [ ] With penalty (additional 50% after Jan. 15, 2024)

[ ] First-season stallion (within 60 days of 1<sup>st</sup> cover) [ ] First-season with penalty (additional 50% after 60 days)

*The Stallion Nomination Fee is the amount of the 2024 Service Fee plus the above surcharge for fees \$3,000 US (\$4,107.45 CAD) or over*

2024 Service Fee \_\_\_\_\_ + Surcharge ( % ) \_\_\_\_\_ = Nomination Fee enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_



# Ratliff Joins OHHA Staff



The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association has named former MGM Northfield Park announcer Ayers Ratliff, Jr. as its Assistant Director. Ratliff will support the Executive Director to further the Association's activities, including operations, administration, staff

management, training, best practices, strategic planning, outreach, print publications, and promotions.

Ratliff grew up in the industry and is a true supporter of harness racing. His father, Ayers Ratliff, Sr., owned a stable of racehorses and a breeding farm, Wakeshire Standardbreds, that stood stallions Happy Motoring and Amity Chef. Ratliff spent his childhood years baling hay and straw for the farm, breaking yearlings, cleaning stalls, paddocking racehorses, and attending the races.

Ratliff served as the track announcer at Northfield Park from 2007 – 2022. In addition to announcing at Northfield Park, he worked at Scioto Downs as an announcer, television analyst, and morning-line oddsmaker. Ratliff also served as track announcer for Raceway Park, Hazel Park, and Thistledown. He is also the announcer at a number of Ohio county fairs.

During his 16 years at Northfield, Ratliff's position grew from Track Announcer to Racing Manager. His role at Northfield included announcing, serving as Assistant Director of Racing, managing the judges, charting, covering the entire press box, serving as the track's publicist, and being an active member of the marketing and promotions team.

Most recently, Ayers served as the Investigation Supervisor for the Ohio State Racing Commission.

"I am thankful for the opportunities provided to me to work in the industry in which I truly love," said Ratliff. "This is a brand-new position so I am the first person to fill the role of Assistant Director for the OHHA. My work for Ohio's horsemen will always be done to the best of my ability and will have a focus on cooperation and collaboration throughout the industry to further the cause of harness racing here in the Buckeye State."

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# TRACK NOTES



Aaron Merriman moved into the top three in all-time wins by a driver in November. Merriman passed Herve Filion.

Merriman tied Filion for third place on November 22 when he drove Dudley to a come-from-behind win for trainer Whitney Johnson.

“It’s totally surreal. Herve was one of the greatest drivers of all time. To be in the

Aaron Merriman

same vicinity of his greatness is astounding to me,” said a jubilant Merriman on social media.

Merriman, who began his driving career in 1997, has won the Northfield dash title ten times throughout his career and has been the national dash champion in eight straight seasons. Merriman has over \$112 million in career earnings.



Ants Marching **Photo:** Brad Conrad

Ants Marching set a new track record at Hollywood Dayton Raceway on November 16. The son of Downbytheseaside smashed the record for three-year-old gelded pacers. Jeremy Smith sat in the pocket, swung wide around the final turn, and reeled in the leader to win by a neck in 1:49. The old mark of 1:50.1 was held by Snowmoon and Vel Mr Nice Guy. Todd Luther trains Ants Marching.

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Braiden Rhoades **Photo:** Cassalinova Photography

Third generation horseman Braiden Rhoades earned his first career driving win November 14th at MGM Northfield Park. Rhodes drove The Bus A to an easy win in 1:57. Braiden, the son of trainer Bill Rhoades, started driving last year. He came close with a couple of second place finishes at the Tuscarawas County Fair. “It means a lot to me to get my first win,” said Rhoades. “I’ve always wanted to be a driver. I’m glad I am getting the opportunity to do what I love.”



BEYOND THE TRACK -

# Princeofrocknroll is Still a Prince





# “He has broken the mold from the myths I was taught as a kid.”

Jamie Doup - Owner, Princeofrocknroll



Princeofrocknroll raced through the Ohio fairs at two and three and finished his career in the Signature Series at some of those same fairs when he was six. As a 3-year-old he won seven races and \$32,345 with one of those wins at 99-1 odds! As a 5-year-old, he set a track record at the Champaign County Fair of 1:54.3. Owned and loved throughout his career by Carol and Arnold Johnston, they donated him to New Vocations when he retired at the end of 2020.

Upon his arrival in early January, New Vocations trainer Bridget Heasley found Prince to be very quiet and willing. He took to riding easily and Bridget soon had him out on the trails. It wasn't long until he was adopted by Jamie Doup of Galena, Ohio.

Jamie grew up showing quarter horses and playing polo at The Ohio State University. "I had always heard the myths that Standardbreds do not make good riding horses," she said. "They had the reputation of being ugly, rough to ride, and only good for pulling a cart. However, as an adult I met many people who had Standardbreds

and found them to be the exact opposite." As she learned more about the breed, Jamie was impressed with not only their speed, but their durability.

"When I adopted Prince, I found him to be level headed and easily trainable," she said. "Even though he was nervous in new situations, he was not spooky like the young quarter horses I have known or out of control energy like the thoroughbreds I've worked with straight off the track."

Princeofrocknroll, now fittingly called Axl Rose, has proven to be a good trail mount for Jamie. She's ridden him in many Ohio parks and even camped out overnight. She rides at all gaits and enjoys staying fit and being out in nature. Jamie and Axl have also competed in hunter paces as well as in showmanship and walk/trot contesting. "Axl is still competitive and quick," she said. He found hunter paces to be fun races; he growls at other horses if they aren't going fast enough in front of him!"

This year, Jamie and Axl took up mounted shooting through the Mid-Ohio Maraud-

ers. "The sport is really fun and there are a few other Standardbreds doing well at these events," she said. "I hope we can ease our way into it. Axl is ok with gun fire, and a champ at wearing ear plugs (thank you racing days), but he is not quite ready for me to fire off him just yet."

Jamie said she's learned a lot about the breed in the past three years. "Overall, Standardbreds come off the track with great ground manners, great loading and hauling skills, and they stand tied with no issues. They have a good trainable brain and become sure footed on the trails quite quickly.

"I'm happy to have found a partner that is willing to try new events with me. He is progressing with every month that passes and getting better all the time. He hides his brand under his mane, and many people do not believe he is a Standardbred. He has broken the mold from the myths I was taught as a kid, and I'm happy to spread the word to others about this amazing breed!"



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# THERE IS A FUTURE FOR YOU IN HARNES RACING

## OHHA Attends FFA National Convention

The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association was part of a coalition of horsemen organizations that participated at the National FFA convention in Indianapolis.

A dozen tracks and horsemen's associations combined on a large booth at the event with the theme "There is a future for you in harness racing." Among the interactive displays were the OHHA virtual reality race bike, the equine bone box, and the leg bandaging station.

"Because we are looking at the leaders of the future, it is important for our organizations to spotlight the role the equine industry has when it comes to agriculture," said OHHA Project Coordinator Susan Schroeder.

Over 72,000 students from across the United States attended the conference. The first convention was held in 1928 in Kansas City, Missouri. It has been held in Louisville and will be hosted by the city of Indianapolis through 2031.





## OHIO BREEDERS AWARD REQUIREMENTS

**Mares registered in 2019** (Foals of 2020)  
**mare registration date 11/30/19**

Foal Age	Membership Requirement
Foal Born 2020	Membership Required
Yearling 2021	No Membership Required
2 & 3-Year-Old 2022, 2023	No Membership Required

**Mares registered in 2020** (Foals of 2021)  
**mare registration date 11/30/20**

Foal Age	Membership Requirement
Foal Born 2021	Membership Required
Yearling 2022	No Membership Required
2 & 3-Year-Old 2023, 2024	No Membership Required

**Mares registered in 2021** (Foals of 2022)  
**mare registration date 11/30/21**

Foal Age	Membership Requirement
Foal Born 2022	Membership Required
Yearling 2023	No Membership Required
2 & 3-Year-Old 2024, 2025	No Membership Required

**Mares registered in 2022** (Foals of 2023)  
**mare registration date 11/30/22**

Foal Age	Membership Requirement
Foal Born 2023	Membership Required
Yearling 2024	No Membership Required
2 & 3-Year-Old 2025, 2026	No Membership Required

**Mares registered in 2023** (Foals of 2024)  
**mare registration date 11/30/23**

Foal Age	Membership Requirement
Foal Born 2024	Membership Required
Yearling 2025	No Membership Required
2 & 3-Year-Old 2026, 2027	No Membership Required

**Registration Fee:** \$20 per mare. For mares registered in 2019 forward, **in addition to the \$20 registration fee per mare, registrations received from December 1st to December 31st must add a \$100 per-mare late fee. Registration will not be accepted until all fees are paid in full.**

**Membership Requirements:** All owners of the mare (including those in businesses or stables) are required to join as Active OHHA Members. All business entities or stables listed as owners are also required to join as Associate Members.

**Mare Residency:** Mare in foal to an Ohio Stallion, must foal in Ohio, and reside in Ohio for 187 consecutive days in the year of foaling.

### OHHA SENDS OUR CONDOLENCES TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF

Grace Ballinger • Paul Roberts

Donald Wolfe

## Thank You to our 2023 P.A.C.E.R. Contributors

### OHHA Pacesetters as of 11/30/23

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Gregory Bateson	David McElrath
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Greg Luther	



# Regularly Scheduled Meeting Recaps *By Renée Mancino*

## Wednesday, September 13, 2023

*The meeting was held at the Riffe Center, Columbus, Ohio. Roll Call, all Commissioners in-person.*

In normal business for the Commission, Executive Director Chris Dragone's Report and Approval items were introduced, and the Wednesday, July 12, 2023, minutes were offered for ratification. Executive Director Chris Dragone discussed a formal investigation regarding public accusations against Presiding Judge Doug Thomas. The accusations were turned over to and investigated in association with the Attorney General's office.

Director Dragone said all accusations were investigated and summarily dismissed as without merit.

Chairman Scott Borgemenke placed a hold on fine money request expenditures pending review. The Racing Commission will review the use of fine money and will report back after the review. Anything in the pipeline until now is approved and will be processed, no new requests will be accepted.

The Executive Director's report items included the 2023 live racing approvals. Mahoning Valley and Hollywood Gaming at Dayton submitted requests to (1) Waive their surety bond for 2023 race meets, (2) Approve listed officials, (3) Approve the number of races and wagering format, (4) Approve post times, (5) Approve their simulcasting schedule, and (6) Approve their letters to the Fire Marshall. Approvals related to the submission were discussed after enumerating the list as normal and customary, and no documents were provided to those in attendance. The Racing Commission unanimously ratified all requests.

A recap on the horse racing fatalities was provided by Racing Commission Consulting Veterinarian, Dr. James Robertson. Dr. Robertson noted that the numbers reported since 2009 are for training and racing related catastrophic breakdowns, analogous to the Jockey Club's reporting requirements for sudden deaths that occur during training, racing, or 72 hours after a race. From April 2022 forward, records are kept following a horse post-injury, with post-injury tracking of up to ten days from the race date. To date, the monthly report on catastrophic losses includes four thoroughbreds in July, six thoroughbreds in August, and one standardbred training fatality in July.

The 2023 year-to-date thoroughbred catastrophic losses were twenty-eight (nine training, nineteen racing) and one standardbred.

Monthly financial Report by Fiscal Officer Sheri White reported monthly revenue into the new fiscal year was up \$91,000 in July and \$10,700 in August for a year-to-date increase of \$102,000 over the prior year's revenue. Chairman Borgemenke expressed expectation that revenue has plateaued and will remain static going forward. Expenses were down 20% with the main savings coming from the lack of medication and testing on thoroughbreds. The Racing Commission Operating Fund contains over \$2.1 million. Chairman Borgemenke represented live handle in continued decline; they have waited to initiate deduction of the additional 5% from the casino commission.

In the matter of Lanny Merriman: The State Veterinarian levied a claim that Mr. Merriman was unprofessional and rude towards the State Veterinarian in the Test Barn after the fifth race on May 3, 2023, which was against the best interests of racing. Mr. Merriman was fined \$1000 and suspended from the State Test Barn for 30 days. The penalty would have been reduced to a fine of \$500 and 30-days suspension from the State Test Barn if not appealed. Mr. Merriman appealed. After hearing on June 28, 2023, in which Mr. Merriman represented himself, the Hearing Officer issued a report and recommendation June 29, 2023 that upheld the judge's ruling. After discussion the Racing Commission unanimously voted to uphold the hearing officer's report and recommendation.

In the matter of JD Perrin: Mr. Perrin failed to provide information regarding pending felonious assault charges at the time of application on renewal for his Ohio State Racing Commission license. The judges suspended Mr. Perrin's license for 203 days, denied him the privileges of all OSRC licensed grounds, and horses he owned could be transferred by the judges or Racing Commission. Mr. Perrin appealed the decision, and a hearing was conducted reviewing the judges' decision. The Hearing Officer's report and recommendation was issued July 6, 2023 to uphold the judges' ruling. Commissioners discussed the status of Mr. Perrin's felony charge at the time of appli-

cation for his license because he was working his way through the court system without final resolution. Attorney General Todd DeBoe set forth knowledge of the felony charge at the time of application triggered the disclosure requirement. As of the date of licensure, the charge should have been disclosed regardless of final status of the initial charge. The Racing Commission unanimously voted to uphold the hearing officer's report and recommendation.

HISA Update: The Ohio Department of Agriculture and the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority have agreed on testing for the Horseracing Integrity and Welfare Unit.

Commissioner Hansen Chairwoman of the Medication and Testing Committee reported no scheduled meetings or agenda items.

Commissioner Simpson Chairman of the Safety Committee had no report.

Commissioner Winters Chairman of the Standardbred Committee reported the Commission's initiative to combine Chapters 1 and 11.

In Chairman's comments, Chairman Scott Borgemenke detailed the costs on licensing as being static for several years. The fingerprinting costs are pass-through costs. The costs on licensing will be discussed among the Commission before next year's renewals.

The Chairman reiterated to Miami Valley Gaming they must put up a fence around the ponds; it is non-negotiable. He requested a status update for that being completed for the next racing commission meeting.

The Racing Commission adjourned into Executive Session; no business would be conducted after the executive session, so the motion and vote were taken to adjourn and conclude the meeting.

For a transcript of the meeting contact the Ohio State Racing Commission. The next scheduled Racing Commission meeting date is October 17, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in person only at the Riffe Center 77 South High Street, 19th Floor, Room 1948. The Agenda and Meeting Information can be found at the Ohio State Racing Commission's website at, <http://www.racingohio.net>.

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## Wednesday, October 25, 2023

*The meeting was held at the Riffe Center, Columbus, Ohio. Roll Call, all Commissioners in-person.*

*The Racing Commission moved to go into public session shortly after 10:00 a.m. from an executive session meeting held at 9:30 a.m.*

Congratulations were offered to new Commissioner In normal business for the Commission,

Executive Director Chris Dragone's Report and Approval items were introduced, and the Wednesday, September 13, 2023, minutes were offered for ratification. Chairman Scott Borgemenke provided clarification that horsemen's requests for fine money expenditures are frozen pending review. The Racing Commission will review the use of fine money and will report after the review.

Anything in the pipeline such as Thistledown's Cedar Point Horsemen's outing approved before the freeze will be processed; no new requests will be accepted.

Chairman Scott Borgemenke discussed the Senate Bill 9 requirements to reduce regulation by 10%. Resolution 2023-10 covered Chapters 3 and 13. 985 "shall" provisions were replaced with



“will” or other synonyms with the Resolution. The requirement is to reduce by an additional 8% going forward.

Chairman Scott Borgemenke also discussed the Casino Commission Resolution. The formulaic approach in place since initial receipt will be looked-at and a redistribution will be considered for the funds. Interested parties will be notified and have an opportunity to be heard regarding the formula change.

Agenda Item 8 was tabled without discussion.

A recap on the horse racing fatalities was provided by Racing Commission Consulting Veterinarian, Dr. James Robertson. Dr. Robertson noted that the numbers reported since 2009 are for training and racing related catastrophic breakdowns, analogous to the Jockey Club’s reporting requirements for sudden deaths that occur during training, racing, or 72 hours after a race. From April 2022 forward records are kept following a horse post injury, with post-injury tracking of up to ten days from the race date. To date, the monthly report on catastrophic losses includes two thoroughbreds in September, no standardbred catastrophic losses in September. The 2023 year-to-date thoroughbred catastrophic losses were thirty (ten training, twenty racing) and one standardbred (training). The thoroughbred total for Thistledown was the lowest in years at 1.15 per 1,000 starts on dirt. The racetrack veterinarians are to be commended for the exemplary job they are doing in overseeing racing.

Monthly financial Report by Fiscal Officer Sheri White reported monthly revenue for September as always tough. September’s revenue was down \$104,000 with \$191,000 in testing costs including County Fair testing, and a third payroll in the

month. October is projected higher due to the Casino Commission revenue. Fiscal Year revenue is down 17% year-over-year and live racing’s tax revenue is down 19%. Expenses were reduced by 26%. Net is below projections with a modest net-income projected for the year. Chairman Scott Borgemenke discussed the Ohio Gaming Committee, which will commence discussions regarding gaming and expansions in Ohio. The Chairman’s opinion is they cannot regulate properly with the current funding levels and that will be brought forward for discussion with the Committee. There will be a request for change to get financing done. The suggestion for industry participants is to take this opportunity to talk about the industry.

Commissioner Hansen Chairwoman of the Medication and Testing Committee had no report. Commissioner Simpson Chairman of the Safety Committee reported had no report.

Commissioner Winters Chairman of the Standardbred Committee reported on the Standardbred Development Committee meeting scheduled for October 25, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. at Caesars Scioto Downs.

In the matter of Bill Rhoades: Attorney Alison Boggs appeared on behalf of Mr. Rhoades. A test sample from MGM Northfield Park November 8, 2022 from Sheswildnfree was found to contain D-Methamphetamine, a Class 1 Category A offense. It was Mr. Rhoades’ first offense in 365 days. Pending no additional Class 1 or Class 2 infractions within the next year, the judges levied a 60-day suspension with 305 days stayed, a \$1,000 fine, disqualification, and return of the \$2,750 purse. Mr. Rhoades appealed; a hearing was held August 25, 2023. The Hearing Officer’s Report

issued September 25, 2023 upheld the judge’s recommendation.

Attorney General Todd DeBoe recommended adopting the Hearing Officer’s Report and Recommendation. Attorney Boggs brought forward procedural and due process concerns. The urine sample was not tested to confirm D-Methamphetamine as recommended by accredited laboratory testing standards and a correspondence from Dr. Richard Sams relative to a D-Methamphetamine screening limit and trustworthiness in blood testing unless confirmed by testing urine. Mr. Rhoades requested a quantitative analysis and qualitative was requested on the split sample from the testing lab by the Racing Commission. Taking three vials of blood where two are mixed resulting in a Sample “A”, and the third as a Sample “B” and used for a DNA confirmation test, which Mr. Rhoades did not request. The split sample is drawn off the combined “A” sample instead of using the “B” sample. Here Sample “B” remained untested. Attorney Boggs argued the Racing Commission as custodian of all evidence did not release information so horsemen could not defend themselves or use that for mitigation.

After discussion the Racing Commission unanimously voted to uphold the Hearing Officer’s Report and Recommendation.’

For a transcript of the meeting contact the Ohio State Racing Commission. The next scheduled Racing Commission meeting date is November 15, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in person only at the Riffe Center 77 South High Street, 19th Floor, Room 1948. The Agenda and Meeting Information can be found at the Ohio State Racing Commission’s website at, <http://www.racingohio.net>.

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## Wednesday, November 15, 2023

*Regularly scheduled Racing Commission Meeting recap from Wednesday, November 15, 2023. By Renée Mancino*

*The meeting was held at the Riffe Center, Columbus, Ohio. Roll Call, all Commissioners in-person.*

In normal business for the Commission, Executive Director Chris Dragone’s Report and Approval items were introduced, and the Wednesday, October 15, 2023 minutes were offered for ratification. Executive Director Chris Dragone requested all import-export approvals for 2024 in by December 20, 2023.

Deputy Director Tanya Boulmetis discussed the Senate Bill 9 requirements to reduce regulation by 10%. Resolution 2023-06 was final-filed November 17, 2023. Resolution 2023-10 covered Chapters 3 and 13, has been final-filed and will be effective February 16, 2023. 985 “shall” provisions were replaced with “will” or other synonyms with the Resolution, which has removed 1,019 “shall”s from 131 rules. The requirement is to reduce by an additional 8% going forward. They will comply

with the 10% threshold by January 26, 2024, and have another 10% that must be completed by June 3, 2024. Chairman Borgemenke stated the immediate intent is to comply with S.B. 9 without changing the intent of the rules. The rules will have substantive changes considered once compliant with the mandate. The 5-year rule reviews up for review this year will have substantive changes.

Chairman Scott Borgemenke discussed Resolution 2023-11 Delegation of Authority of items the Racing Commission permits the Executive Director to complete without post-consideration ratification but summary report include: (1) authorizing changes to racing officials, (2) uncoupling entries, (3) authorizing special events, (4) post time changes, (5) changing wagering formats, (6) authorizing specific simulcast programs before noon, (7) approval of host-guest lists and changes, (8) approving jockey-apprentice weight, (9) authorizing approval of fine money expenditures, (10) 3769.089(9)(C) live race day approval, (11) approving cancellation day purse account payouts,

(12) approving waiver on 3769-15- 31(B)(2) the fair preference waiver approval, (13) approval of import-export, (14) approval to cancel live racing when the integrity of the racing product could be questioned, and (14) authorizing the Assistant Executive Director or Deputy Director to act absent the Executive Director.

Agenda Item 6: Consideration of meeting requests for live dates and to issue permits for Mahoning Valley, Northfield Park, and Miami Valley. It was noted that Miami Valley Gaming and Hollywood Dayton do not have final two-party agreements in place. Chairman Scott Borgemenke discussed Caesars Scioto having a valid two-party in place. In discussing with Hollywood Gaming Director of Racing, Jason Bluhm, and Miami Valley Gaming Director of Racing, Ken Rambo, both represented “minor” issues on condition restrictions. The Racing Commission approved Northfield Park’s and Mahoning Valley’s live dates and issued the permits for the live meet. Miami Valley Gaming and Hollywood Gaming at Dayton will be held pending final Two Party



Agreement. Chairman Scott Borgemenke pulled the agenda item for approval on Miami Valley Gaming and Hollywood Dayton.

A recap on the horse racing fatalities was provided by Racing Commission Consulting Veterinarian, Dr. James Robertson. Dr. Robertson noted that the numbers reported since 2009 are for training and racing related catastrophic breakdowns, analogous to the Jockey Club's reporting requirements for sudden deaths that occur during training, racing, or 72 hours after a race. From April 2022 forward records are kept following a horse post injury, with post-injury tracking of up to ten days from the race date. To date, the monthly report on catastrophic losses includes three thoroughbreds in October, no standardbred catastrophic losses in October.

The 2023 year-to-date thoroughbred catastrophic losses were thirty-three (ten training, twenty-three racing) and one standardbred (training).

Consulting Veterinarian Dr. Robertson spoke regarding catastrophic loss necropsies. Standardbred catastrophic loss horses have a full necropsy by the Ohio Department of Agriculture if the cause of death cannot be determined by the regulatory veterinarian euthanizing the horse. A full necropsy occurs, and the Ohio State

Racing Commission can request additional, follow-up testing if questions arise regarding necropsy results. HISA necropsy processes were discussed as non-uniform and inadequate when compared to standardbred necropsy. Northern Ohio thoroughbred racetracks (Thistedown and Mahoning Valley) under HISA use the Ohio State University for necropsy and, by contract with HISA, it is a partial necropsy. Belterra Park under HISA uses the University of Kentucky, and a catastrophic loss horse receives a complete necropsy. For Northern Ohio tracks, HISA's limited necropsy restricts the necropsy to limbs only. Once the limbs are examined the horse is no longer available for additional testing or follow-up. Discussed was the example of a catastrophic loss horse that the regulatory veterinarian couldn't confirm was due to a leg fracture or hip fracture. The necropsy was limited by HISA to limb necropsy only. The necropsy determined the horse did not fracture a leg. The necropsy was inconclusive because they could not go past the limbs during the necropsy under the HISA contract. After discussion the Racing Commission unanimously moved to send a Resolution to HISA demanding a full and complete necropsy on all Ohio catastrophic loss horses.

The Ohio Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association's Executive Director, Dave Basler, discussed a "stand down" agreement signed between them and HISA for assessment fee payment. Under the Agreement assessment fees will not be paid until at least April 2024. Mr. Basler also provided information regarding the non-uniformity of enforcement with HISA. Within two weeks of each other the "uniform" application of HIWU rules to three race sample violations for Altrenogest haven't been so uniform. Trainer Natalia Lynch got 2 years and \$25,000 for Altrenogest,

Trainer Bruno Tessore got a 3-month suspension for Altrenogest, Trainer Shane Meyers got his Altrenogest positive test thrown out because the "B" sample could not be tested. After these three results, HISA has submitted a request to modify Altrenogest from a prohibited substance to a permitted therapeutic. Altrenogest violations going forward after amendment will be a \$500 fine.

Commentary on the 60 minutes broadcast regarding the statements made and narrative set forth by HISA: Chairman Scott Borgemenke stated the state racing commissions have not had the money or staff to properly regulate. Further, uniformity, transparency and continuity haven't occurred with HISA.

Monthly financial Report by Fiscal Officer Sheri White reported monthly revenue for October up slightly by

\$33,000. Fiscal Year revenue is down 19%. Expenses were reduced by 21%. Net is below projections with a modest net-income projected for the year. Chairman Borgemenke stated a review of policies in place for the casino commission allocations would be a future agenda item.

The Medication and Testing Committee, Safety Committee and Standardbred Committee did not report.

In the matters of Herman Hagerman and Jason McGinnis: Attorney Alison Boggs appeared on behalf of Mr. Hagerman and McGinnis both.

In Mr. Hagerman's case a test sample from MGM Northfield Park from November 26, 2022, for Dashintothebeach N, contained D-Methamphetamine, a Class 1 Category A offense. The judges levied a 365-day suspension, a \$1,000 fine, disqualification, and return of the \$9,000 purse which will be reduced to 60 days if Mr. Hagerman does not have a Class 1 or 2 positive within the next year or appeal the infraction. Any horses he wants to transfer to another owner or trainer must be approved by the judges. After appeal, a hearing was held August 22, 2023, with a report issued October 12, 2023. The Hearing Officer's report recommended upholding the Judges' ruling.

In Mr. McGinnis' case a test sample from MGM Northfield Park from March 1, 2023, for HP Maestro, contained D-Methamphetamine, a Class 1 Category A offense. The judges levied a 365-day suspension, a

\$1,000 fine, disqualification, and return of the \$5,000 purse which will be reduced to 60 days if Mr. Hagerman does not have a Class 1 or 2 positive within the next year or appeal the infraction. Any horses he wants to transfer to another owner or trainer must be approved by the judges. After appeal a hearing was held September 18, 2023, with a report issued October 18, 2023. The Hearing Officer's report recommended upholding the judges' ruling.

In both cases Attorney Boggs brought forth detail that both horsemen requested quantitative analysis of their split samples. It was not performed, instead qualitative analysis was performed. Mr. McGinnis' urine sample tested clear after inde-

pendent testing as testified to by an expert witness. Mr. Hagerman was not given the opportunity for the urine sample to be tested despite request. In Mr. Hagerman's case Attorney Boggs set forth inadequate evidence in the record being made by the Racing Commission of the details that showed the horse raced like the racing program, race card, with other facts failed to prove their case by a preponderance of the evidence.

Attorney Boggs provided evidence of a letter from Dr. Sams setting an environmental contaminant screening limit for D-Methamphetamine in plasma and offering best practices for testing. Testing in Plasma is preferred because the presence can be quantified. However, Dr. Sams opined that urine should verify the presence of D-Methamphetamine, although it cannot be quantified in urine. Attorney Boggs also provided International Lab Accreditation standards that mandate the same best practices for testing.

Attorney Boggs maintained the inability to have a quantitative analysis done on both plasma samples, the lack of a urine sample confirmation in both cases, no Racing Commission adoption of the ARCI model rules for penalties, no statutory authority to return purse money in the Revised Code, no authority in the Revised Code for the judges to prevent transfer on horses without judges approval, and the inability of the horsemen to obtain the evidence necessary to mitigate or defend themselves against the charges levied (refused quantitative analysis that the horses' D-Methamphetamine levels do in-fact exceed the screening limit) these issues did not permit the horsemen to defend themselves and provide a clearly erroneous standard that should be overturned. Assistant Attorney General Yosef Schiff stated, "environmental contamination and performance enhancement is irrelevant", reference to the ARCI guidelines can be referred to, they are not required to adopt them, an internal screening limit is a tolerance of up to a quantitative amount, and Ohio is zero tolerance, which cannot be challenged making those points irrelevant. After discussion, the Racing Commission unanimously voted to uphold the Hearing Officer's Report and Recommendation in both cases.

Chairman Scott Borgemenke discussed the Ohio Gaming Committee, which will commence discussions regarding gaming and expansions in Ohio in 2024. The Chairman's suggestion for industry participants for the second time is to take this opportunity to talk about the industry. During the process he will do his best to keep the information public.

For a transcript of the meeting contact the Ohio State Racing Commission. The next scheduled Racing Commission meeting date is December 13, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in person only at the Riffe Center 77 South High Street, 19th Floor, Room 1948. The Agenda and Meeting Information can be found at the Ohio State Racing Commission's website at, <http://www.racingohio.net>.



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