

OHHA NEWS

June 2016

Norma's Rose Visits Students at Trumbull Career and Technical Center

By Courtney Blodgett

Norma's Rose, an 11-year old mare who is currently racing at Northfield Park, visited Trumbull Career and Technical Center's Equine Management Program in Warren, Ohio on May 13, to teach high school students about harness racing. Norma's Rose is owned and trained by Courtney Blodgett and her father Lee Blodgett.

"The majority of my students don't even know what a halter is when they first come into the program," stated Lisa Street, the teacher of the program. The students in the program are juniors and seniors that come to the career center from various high schools throughout Trumbull County. They are learning about different breeds, horse health, and basic horse knowledge. "Most of my horses are donated, so it's hard for me to get a racehorse that the students can learn from. We're lucky that Courtney and Lee allow us to use Norma's Rose to teach the students," Street stated.

Courtney made a presentation for the students and shared information about the Standardbred as well as basic facts about harness racing. She also taught the students how to harness a racehorse. Courtney also explained the different pieces of equipment that Standardbreds use while racing. Street said "My goal

when my students graduate from the program is that they are able to find a job within the equine industry. This presentation made my students realize how many jobs there are within the harness racing industry," said Street.

The students really enjoyed the program and had fun while learning more about harness racing. It was fun planning this event and really rewarding seeing all of the hard work providing a positive result. Most of the students didn't really know what a Standardbred was. As a graduate from the program in 2014, it was great to be able to give back to the program and promote something that I absolutely love, which is harness racing.

The students now want to go to a race-track and see harness racing first hand. This promotes harness racing and demonstrates that we need to get the younger generation involved. If these kids go home and tell their family and friends how much fun it is, it would most definitely be a way to push our industry in the right direction. I would like to think that if I could get 30 teenagers interested in harness racing it would be a productive day. The



Class from Trumbull Career and Technical Center pose with Norma Rose. Photo by Courtney Blodgett.

students really enjoyed being able to be that up close to a racehorse. Many of them took selfies with Norma, and she really enjoyed doing it. I'm extremely thankful for the OHHA, the USTA, Northfield Park, and New Vocations for sending me stuff to give to the students. They are truly who made this all possible.

Interested in educating about harness racing to youth classes and organizations? Contact the OHHA office to find out how you can become involved.

Upcoming Summer Activities

Regina Mayhugh

Summer is a busy time of the year for the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association (OHHA) and for all those involved in the sport of harness racing. In the office the OHHA staff has been busy preparing for the season with some new and exciting promotional activities that I am sure you will enjoy. OHHA designed the new "Racing with the Stars" tour that has been offered to fairs who would like set up the booth as an interactive display at fairs to promote harness racing. This new feature has become very popular and will make an appearance at 30 fairs across the State of Ohio, plus it will be part of a

display at the Ohio State Fair.

With the excitement of the fairs, OHHA welcomes Hunter Holton as our summer intern. Holton will be visiting many Ohio fairs, spending his days educating fans, interviewing horsemen and bringing Ohio Fair Racing to social media more than ever before. OHHA is excited to have Holton on board and for the work he will accomplish this fair season in promoting racing in Ohio.

The OHHA also has a project for any driver interested in sharing with fans, driver autograph cards. Fairs can host autograph sessions or drivers can pass out autographed postcards as they meet and talk to people at the fairs. Any driver interested in participating, send a photo

of you (be sure you have permission to use it and credit who the photo is by) along with a biography of yourself (anything you'd like to share that you think would interest fans such as how long you have been driving, why you enjoy driving, etc.) to rmayhugh@ohha.com. We will print the cards and mail them to you.

During the "Racing with the Stars" tour, any member who is visiting a fair where it is displayed is welcome and encouraged to spend some time in the tent to interact with fans as well. OHHA is also looking for volunteers to work shifts later this summer at the

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Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association

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2016 Racing Dates

Northfield Park
Jan. 1 - Dec. 30
(221 Live Days)

Miami Valley Gaming
Jan. 9 - May 8
(86 live days)

Scioto Downs
May 10 - Sept. 10
(90 live days)

Hollywood at
Dayton Raceway
Sept. 12 - Dec. 30
(75 live days)

Important Dates

OSRC Monthly Meeting

June 29 at 10 a.m.
Columbus Riffe Center
77 S. High St.,
Columbus, Ohio
Room 1952

OHHA Board Meeting

July 22 & October 25
Embassy Suites Dublin
5100 Upper Metro Place
Dublin, OH 43017

HHYF Summer Camp

HHYF Overnight Camp

June 18 – 22
Delaware (OH) County
Fairgrounds

HHYF Day Camp

August 9 Scioto Downs
August 10 Van Wert

Cover Photo by Conrad
Photo

From Your Executive Director

Renée Mancino

Ohio Fair Racing Program

Ohio is home to 94 County Agricultural Fairs, Festivals, Exhibitions, and shows. Agricultural Fairs are scheduled every week starting with Paulding County Fair in Paulding, Ohio on June 13-18, 2016 and wrapping up the Agricultural Fair season with the Fairfield County Fair held in Lancaster, Ohio on October 9-15, 2016. The Ohio State Fair is held almost in the middle of the Agricultural Fair season at the State Fairgrounds in Columbus from July 27th to Aug 7, 2016. The State Fair, active since 1850, is a 12-day event and 2015 saw record attendance of 982,305. During the four-month period of time from June to October there is an Agricultural Fair to enjoy in Ohio every week, with several fairs overlapping in many weeks.

The Ohio Fair Manager's Association (O.F.M.A.) is a non-profit Association that represents the ninety-four Ohio Fairs and more than 240 associate members from allied fields. They have represented and promoted agriculture and the general welfare of the Ohio County Fairs since 1922. They also promote cooperation and collaboration among the County Fairs and Commodity Agricultural Organizations.

During that four-month period of time during the summer the Agricultural Fairs host standardbred racing. Standardbred racing at Ohio's Fairs started in the 1800's, by 1858 there was an organized gentleman and ladies' challenge race at one Fair, with a woman victorious that year.

Steadily growing in popularity, after World War II harness racing in Ohio grew rapidly, by 1958 the Ohio Fairs Fund was developed and approved by Ohio Legislators to establish funding for racing and the fairs. The Ohio Fairs Fund was implemented to alleviate the impact that the pari-mutuel racetracks were having on the fair racing circuits in the 40's and 50's. The Ohio Fairs Fund is a State Fund that receives its main source of revenue from a tax on live-on-track pari-mutuel handle from Ohio's four standardbred pari-mutuel racetracks. During the late 80's and early 90's the Ohio Fairs Fund was at impressive levels when live on-track handle at the Ohio Pari-mutuel Racetracks was quite high, 1989 saw \$3.8 million distributed from the Fund. In re-

cent years the Ohio Fairs Fund has dwindled with live on-track handle. However, with the advent of video lottery terminal wagering at Ohio's Racinos the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association has used a portion of that net revenue share to make up for the live handle shortfall and supplement the Ohio Fairs Fund checks sent to Ohio's Fairs.

Nowhere in the United States does a Standardbred Fair Racing Circuit equal Ohio's in size and scope. In Ohio 65 Fairs host standardbred racing, with 62 of those being pari-mutuel. Five different and individual Circuits oversee the 65 Racing Fairs. The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association oversees and manages the twenty-two Fair, Ohio Fair Racing Conference (O.F.R.C.). The other four Circuits include, the Ohio Colt Racing Association (11 Fairs), Home Talent Colt Stakes (14 Fairs), Western Ohio Colt Racing Association (9 Fairs), and Southern Valley Colt Circuit (9 Fairs).

Unprecedented opportunities for Ohio Standardbred racing participants and fans provide for a host of summer fair time fun. Within Ohio's racing ranks there are many who race strictly on the Ohio Fair Circuit, particularly with their two-year-old horses. Quite often there are two-year olds that never race on a pari-mutuel racetrack until they turn three. During fourteen different days in July, August and September there are three Ohio fairs that race the same day. On four separate days during the summer (August 11th, 23rd, September 3rd, and 15th) there are four fairs racing on the same days.

The Ohio Fair Racing Conference was the end result of a lot of hard work by many, aside from the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association's Board of Directors, Business Analyst Joe Ewing, and Vice President Steve Bateson were the main two behind moving the initiative forward. The goals for the Ohio Fair Racing Conference were to unify and simplify the process and costs for fair staking and nominations for horsemen, reduce the costs and complexity of the racing process for Fair Boards, and provide support for what has been a rapidly changing county fair environment. In a nutshell the ultimate goal was to increase Agricultural Fair participation

in the Fair Racing Program for the, "Horsemen, Fairs, and Fans". The Ohio Fair Racing Conference is overseen by a Board of Directors, that Board is comprised of eight voting members, four each appointed by the Ohio Fair Manager's Association's President and the O.H.H.A. Board President on staggered 3, 2, and 1 year terms. In addition to the Board there are two O.H.H.A. Regional Fair Coordinators in the field who provide support to the O.F.R.C. Fairs. In the O.H.H.A. office staff provides support, with the O.H.H.A.'s Project Coordinator being the main point-of-contact.

With such a robust fair racing program the funding for Ohio Fair Stakes, overnight races, and fair operations comes from two primary sources. The Ohio Fairs Fund and the Ohio Standardbred Horsemen's Video Lottery Terminal Revenue share.

In 2016 the amount available to the Ohio Fairs Fund for distribution to the 94 Agricultural Fairs was \$832,000. That total amount resulted in checks from the Ohio Pari-mutuel tax to each of the 65 racing fairs of \$10,463.26. Of that money, \$2,062 is for general operations, track maintenance, and other expenses for harness racing. The 29 Agricultural Fairs that do not race received \$1,062 each for general operations. With the Ohio Fairs Fund checks each racing fair's base purse (including a mandatory fair board match of \$500 per division) for the eight divisional Ohio Fairs Stakes races is \$1,050. Each Fair receives an additional \$4,000 to put towards overnight racing, or they can use \$3,000 of that total to supplement six of the eight divisional stakes races as their \$500 match, leaving \$1,000 for straight overnight race support, which the fair boards must match under the Fairs Fund.

Since 2013 the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association has used a portion of the Ohio Horsemen's net video lottery terminal revenue share for fair purses and support, which is the second source of fair funding. On April 22, 2016 the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association's Board approved the 2016 supplement



to the Ohio Fairs. For each of the eight divisional fair stakes races (i.e., 2 YO Filly Trotters, 2 YO Filly Pacers, etc.) a \$6,000 supplement was approved. After the addition of that amount to the \$1,050 from the Ohio Fairs Fund, the base purse for each division goes to \$7,050 for 2016. Which means that will be the base purse at each and every one of the 65 racing fairs, regardless of Circuit, for each division of each Ohio Fair Stakes race before splits. That is the base purse also before adding back in all nomination and starting fees paid (applies to the O.F.R.C. Fairs only in 2016) by Owner's nominating horses.

In addition to the purse support the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association's Board also approved fair operations support for each of the 65 racing fairs in the amount of \$11,000 per fair, with non-racing fairs receiving \$2,000 for

a total of \$773,000 to Ohio's 94 Fairs. Adding to that total, the Board approved payment of on-track insurance for up to two days for each fair regardless of Circuit for a total of 123 fair racing days statewide. And they also approved Signature Fair Race Support Grants from \$1,500 to \$15,000 a race (a fair's, "marquee races") for 17 different Fair's Signature overnight races.

Overall the total amount for operational and purse support to Ohio's 94 Fairs between the Ohio Fairs Fund and the Net Video Lottery Terminal Revenue Share for 2016 is over \$4.8 million dollars. That amount has provided the necessary funds for the Fairs to offer substantial purse money on a yearly basis. From 2011's lowest fair purses paid total of \$4,240,796 statewide 2015's total being paid out in Fair purse monies is \$7,359,706.

Those purses further attract pari-mutuel handle at each Ohio Fair. Statewide the pari-mutuel handle for 2015 was almost \$2.7 million dollars for 119 total days raced at the Ohio fairs. 2016 will see an 18% increase to 141 days of fair racing. The only Fair that simulcasts out is the Delaware County Fair and they led the state in total handle with \$1.8 million for five full days of racing offering \$2.3 million in purses. Behind Delaware is the Darke County Fair, Greenville Ohio's five-day handle of \$132,000 with over \$215,000 in purse money offered.

That is the Ohio Fair Racing Program in a nutshell. Join us in Ohio this summer as we enjoy fair racing at its finest every week from June 13th to October 15th, pack a Huff's Racing Guide to provide you with the complete schedule, and we hope to see you there!

Upcoming Events & Fairs

See website for more information www.ohha.com

<u>Paulding Co Fair</u> June 13-15	<u>Logan Co. Fair</u> July 12-13	<u>Crawford Co. Fair</u> July 20-21	<u>Seneca Co. Fair</u> July 25-26
<u>Pickaway Co. Fair</u> June 18-19	<u>Jackson Co. Fair</u> July 15-16	<u>Warren Co Fair</u> July 21	<u>Shelby Co. Fair</u> July 26-27
<u>Putnam Co. Fair</u> June 21-22	<u>Franklin Co. Fair</u> July 17-18	<u>Fayette Co. Fair</u> July 23	<u>Pike Co. Fair</u> July 29-30
<u>Madison Co. Fair</u> July 9-10	<u>Ottawa Co. Fair</u> July 18-19	<u>Union Co. Fair</u> July 23-24	<u>Summit Co. Fair</u> July 30
<u>Clinton Co. Fair</u> July 10-11	<u>Fayette Co. Fair</u> July 20	<u>Knox Co. Fair</u> July 23, 25, 26	<u>Preble Co. Fair</u> July 31

Summer Activities continued from front

Ohio State Fair. For the second year, OHHA will be a participant in the Ohio Farm Bureau's "Land and Living" display from July 27 - August 7. This is another great opportunity to interact with the public and promote our sport. You will meet a wide variety of people who have either been to harness racing at some point in their life, those who didn't know they could still watch harness racing and then many who do not know anything about the sport. It's a fun ten days to spend just sharing all about our sport and providing some educational and interactive activities to children as

well. Contact the office or email rmayhugh@ohha.com for more information.

Planning is underway for the 2016 Charity Night at the Race and will be held at Scioto Downs in August again! This year there will be some new additions. OHHA is inviting 20 charities to participate and will host two charity races that evening. We are researching new ideas and better ways to promote it so we can have an even better event than in the past. OHHA Board members host the charities, but if any OHHA member would like to volunteer to be part of the evening, contact the office. This is a great opportunity for horsemen to share their stories and what they do

with those who are not involved or may even be new to watching races

These are a few of the major activities on the summer schedule. It is also time for another issue the *Buckeye Harness Horseman* to come out in July. OHHA welcomes any stories, photos, upcoming events and advertising opportunities. If you would like to share something in the publication, deadline for all content and ads is **June 15th**.

Have a great summer and if you are not already following us on Facebook or checking out the website, be sure to tune in to keep up with the summer fun!

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Attention- Error in Huff's Guide

Miami County Fair 3 Yr Old Filly OCRA Stake Pace was incorrectly listed in the Staking Guide. The Huff's Guide listing for this event Wed., Aug 17th is correct.

Lorain County Fair In Huff's Guide On Tuesday, August 23rd the following reads Trot, Non winners 1 race lifetime or \$3,000 lifetime. This should listed a Pace.

In normal business for the Commission the Executive Director's Report items were discussed. The first item discussed was "decoupling". No documents relative to decoupling were provided or disclosed. There was no discussion on the items provided to the Commissioners relative to decoupling. Upon query by the Commission the Executive Director also discussed County Fair Preference Waiver requests as part of the Executive Director's Report items. The Executive Director discussed 3-4 Waivers sought by County Fairs for the previous month, which brought the total number of preference waivers sought to 10. No documents were provided relative to the requests, no specific information on the Fairs that had sought and had Preference Waivers approved were disclosed. There was no other discussion on any other items contained in the Executive Director's Report. The Racing Commission unanimously ratified the Executive Director's Report items.

Discussion and presentation by Mark Loewe, Vice President of Racing Operations on Penn Gaming's implementation of their own Advance Deposit Wagering platform implemented under their iGaming division, which includes hollywoodcasino.com, hollywoodslots.com, and hollywoodraces.com. Mr. Loewe represented a desktop, mobile, and live telephone operator based platform based on the Sportech platform. Sportech is an international pool betting operator and technology supplier present in 30 nations processing \$13 Billion in race wagers. Mr. Loewe made representations that they were hopeful that they would go "live" by the end of April. They were currently live and working out any bugs in Pennsylvania; as soon as that process is complete then they will roll the platform out at their Ohio and Massachusetts properties. Further representations were made that all wagers made through the platform will be handled as "live", "on-track" wagers, with the same apportionment to the Horsemen's Purse pools as provided for under R.C. 3769.089 and the Horsemen's Agreements in place at their Ohio locations. Also, any wagers made via their platform will be tied into their Rewards program. Mr. Loewe provided an iPhone to the Commissioners to pass around to look at the mobile application platform. The Commissioners passed around the iPhone among them and discussed various aspects of the user interface. During the course of the conversation the Chairman asked Permit Holders in the audience to disclose whether any of them had an ownership interest in an iGaming or ADW platform. Belterra Park, ThistleDowns, Scioto Downs, and Northfield Park disclosed an ownership interest in an iGaming or ADW platform. Scioto Downs discussed their Americatab based wholly owned subsidiary, racelinebet.com.

Northfield Park discussed their ownership interest in betharness.com also an Americatab based ADW wagering platform. Northfield Park further set out that they collaborated with Twin Spires to service historical accounts for them, but they further set out that they were a separate entity or division from Twin Spires and only related by contract to them. During the discussion of iGaming Commissioner Book asked whether iGaming was illegal in the State of Ohio or whether it needed a Constitutional amendment or Legislative action as Casino Gaming and Racino Gaming required? The Commission's Executive Director set forth iGaming as being legal in Ohio based off of their inquiry into the iGaming wagering issues.

In consideration of Resolution 2016-6, the 3% commission on gross Casino Revenue was disclosed as being \$2,135,668.65 and discussed apportionment to the Racing Commission, Track Operators, and as applied to the purse pools. For Standardbred racetrack purse pool deposits that included: Miami Valley Raceway \$95,987.04, Northfield Park \$274,216.66, Dayton Raceway \$80,151.04, and Scioto Downs \$97,630.39. Standardbred Development and Thoroughbred Race Fund each deposits of \$405,777.04. Also included in the revenue disbursement were distributions to each of four permit holders for commercial operations and the expenses of racing of \$80,087.57 for costs or fees associated with racing, Miami Valley Gaming and Racing, Northfield Park, Belterra Park, and Scioto Downs. The Racing Commission received \$106,783.46 to be used for compensation to administrative staff and support for the Standardbred Development Fund and Thoroughbred Race fund and costs or fees associated with commercial operations of racing at Miami Valley Gaming, Northfield Park, Belterra Park, and Scioto Downs. The Racing Commission received an additional distribution of \$100,000 to their operating fund to support the increase in testing costs at the racetracks. The Racing Commission unanimously ratified the Racing Commission's Casino Revenue allocation.

In consideration of Resolution 2016-7, the Racing Commission set out the 2017 testing costs of one drug test per race deducted from the purse pool per race from July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2017. The cost of testing deducted from the purse pools will be; \$166.00 per Standardbred race and \$157.00 per Thoroughbred race. The cost per race is higher for Standardbred testing due to adding in the testing costs for the sixty-five racing fairs, which increases the average costs over the course of a year as compared to the Thoroughbred testing. The Racing Commission unanimously ratified Resolution 2016-7 approving the costs to be

deducted from the purse pool per test for 2017.

The Racing Commission considered Ohio Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association (OHBPA) request to re-appoint James Morgan as a Trustee to their Health and Retirement Program. He was first appointed as a Trustee in 1998. Mr. Morgan is one of the all-time winning trainers in Ohio. The Racing Commission unanimously ratified the request for appointment.

In the March Monthly financial report on the Racing Commission it was reported that with the casino revenue deposit the month showed a net loss of \$34,000. This number is on par with the previous year over year number. Despite the decrease monthly revenues remain up 3% overall, but expenses are up and the budget is running 39% down overall. However the Casino Commission revenue was up \$67,000 in 2015 and the Racing Commission is expecting a similar gain this year on that revenue. On the expense side there is a 64% increase attributable to an increase in fingerprinting revenue and testing fees. Overall they continue to hold steady with revenue of \$1.6 million in their operating fund balance.

There was no monthly status update on Permit Holder and Horsemen's Agreement Negotiations between Belterra Park and the Ohio Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association (OHBPA).

A recap on the horse racing fatalities was provided for 2016. April had two thoroughbred fatalities at Mahoning Valley and no standardbred fatalities. To date there have been ten total fatalities statewide, six thoroughbred fatalities and four standardbred fatalities. At this same time last year the total was nine.

During the Chairman's Comments the Chairman discussed the soon to open meets at the commercial racetracks. Upcoming new meets at Belterra on April 29, 2016, Scioto Downs opening on May 8, 2016, and ThistleDowns opening on April 25, 2016, with Miami Valley Gaming closing on May 10, 2016.

The Racing Commission did not need an Executive Session. There was no further business so the Motion and Vote was taken to adjourn into Executive Session and conclude the meeting.

For a transcript of the meeting contact the State Racing Commission. The next scheduled Racing Commission meeting date is May 23, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in room 1952. The meeting will be held at the Riffe Center, 77 S. High St., Columbus, Ohio.

Ohio Track Updates

MIAMI VALLEY FINISHES SEASON WITH 40% HANDLE & 30% PURSE INCREASES

Gregg Keidel

LEBANON, OH. – Miami Valley Raceway is pleased to report it experienced significant growth in every measurable category as its 2016 race meet concluded on May 8. Overall handle rose 40% in 2016 as record handle of \$22,408,722 was wagered on Miami Valley Raceway throughout the short season.

“We couldn’t be happier with the response received locally and throughout North America,” stated Racing Operations Manager Helen Carlo. “The team has already begun planning for 2017 to insure Miami Valley Raceway’s product continues to improve.”

Overall purses paid grew to a record level of \$10.2 million, up from approximately \$7.9 million in 2015. “Miami Valley’s racing program elevated to a higher level for the third straight season in 2016,” explained Race Secretary Gregg Keidel. “While we enjoyed 30% higher average nightly purses in 2016, purses at Miami Valley will very likely be on the rise again next season.”

Another indication of the strength of the Miami Valley program was the record number of claims that transpired in 2016. A total of 303 horses changed hands via the claim box for a total of \$3,204,600, an average of \$10,576 per horse. In 2015, the comparative numbers were 247 claims for \$2,122,245, an average of \$8,592 per transaction.

Track speed records were broken on both the pace and trot. Our Dragon King completed the fastest Miami Valley mile ever when he paced in 1:49.3 for driver Josh Sutton and trainer Tyler George on April 23. Lady’s Dude lowered the all-age trotting record to 1:52.1 on April 17 for driver Chris Page and trainer Ron Burke.

The leading driver for the boutique meet was Josh Sutton, who defended his 2015 title with 174 victories accounting for purse earnings of \$1,380,486. Rounding out the Top 10 were Chris Page 148, Jeremy Smith 113, Kayne Kauffman 109, Dan Noble and Tyler Smith 78 each, Trace Tetrick 66, Randy Tharps 61, John DeLong 57 and Kyle Ater 52.

Jeff Brewer won the training title with 37 triumphs and \$311,255 in purse earnings. He was followed by Virgil Morgan Jr. 33, Jeff Nisonger and Tyler George 32 each, Chris Short 28, Jim Arledge Jr., Kayne Kauffman and Charles Stewart all with 25, and Dan Ater, Bill Dailey and Don Eash, each with 20.

An amazing total of 431 different trainers made at least one start in 2016 as horse owners and trainers flocked to Miami Valley to see what the excitement in southwest Ohio was all about. Of that total, 33 conditioners won 10 or more races with 27 of those earning over \$100,000 from their stables.

Miami Valley Raceway wishes to thank the talented and enthusiastic group of horsemen—owners, trainers, drivers and caretakers—who worked and competed so very hard from January 9 through May 8. Miami Valley also thanks its dedicated racing team of employees for their tireless effort and commitment to elevating Miami Valley into a higher class of harness racing.



Josh Sutton and Jeff Brewer won the dash titles for top driver and top trainer at the 2016 Miami Valley Raceway meet, which concluded Sunday (May 8). Sutton won 174 races over the 88-program meet and horses he drove earned \$1,380,486. Brewer pupils captured 37 races and his stable earnings amounted to \$311,255. Congratulating the pair on their successes were Race Secretary Gregg Keidel and Racing Operations Manager Helen Carlo. (Conrad photo)

★ ★ OHHA SPOTLIGHT ★ ★



Meet Kurt Sugg

Driver / Trainer, Polk, Ohio

How long have you been driving?

31 years. I started when I was 15. The OHHA used to sponsor a youth driving challenge at all four pari-mutuel tracks and the Ohio State Fair.

What made you decide to drive horses? It was all I ever wanted to do growing up. I love the competition of racing.

Do you drive as a career, hobby or both?

It is my career and how I earn my living along with training horses.



If you were not driving horses, what do you think you would be doing? I would think I would have been a lawyer. I love to argue my side of a position and back it up with facts.

Name a driver (present or past) that you admire: I would say David Miller. Back in 1985 I spent the summer at Scioto Downs and David had a few horses he trained in the next barn. He didn’t get to drive much then, but since then he has reached the pinnacle of the racing world!

What horse(s) have been your favorite to drive: There are 2, both by Striking Sahbra: Dunkster and Blastaway Sahbra. When you went behind the gate with them you had a very good chance of winning. Their desire to win a race was tremendous. In the 2007 Dygert at Hawthorne Dunkster made the lead with about 3/16ths to go. Dink Adoo came charging at him on the outside looking like he was going to go right on by him. He got to his neck and he refused to let him pass.

Is there a horse past or present that you would like to or wish you could have drove? Life Sign. He liked to rough it more than anything. His win in the Jug was one of the best performances I have ever seen.

What is your favorite thing about driving horses? The excitement of the unknown. Nothing is guaranteed. We are truly based on our performance. It is never the same from race to race.

What is your favorite food and movie? For my last meal I would like a bowl of vanilla ice cream with peanut butter, bananas and chocolate syrup. Back to the Future 2- I have been waiting a long time for flying cars!



Kurt Sugg’s 3,000 presentation at Northfield Park. JJ Zamaiko Photography, Inc.



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Thank You to our 2016 P.A.C.E.R. Contributors

OHHA Pacesetters as of 5/15/16 (in alphabetical order)

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