



American Turf

MAGAZINE

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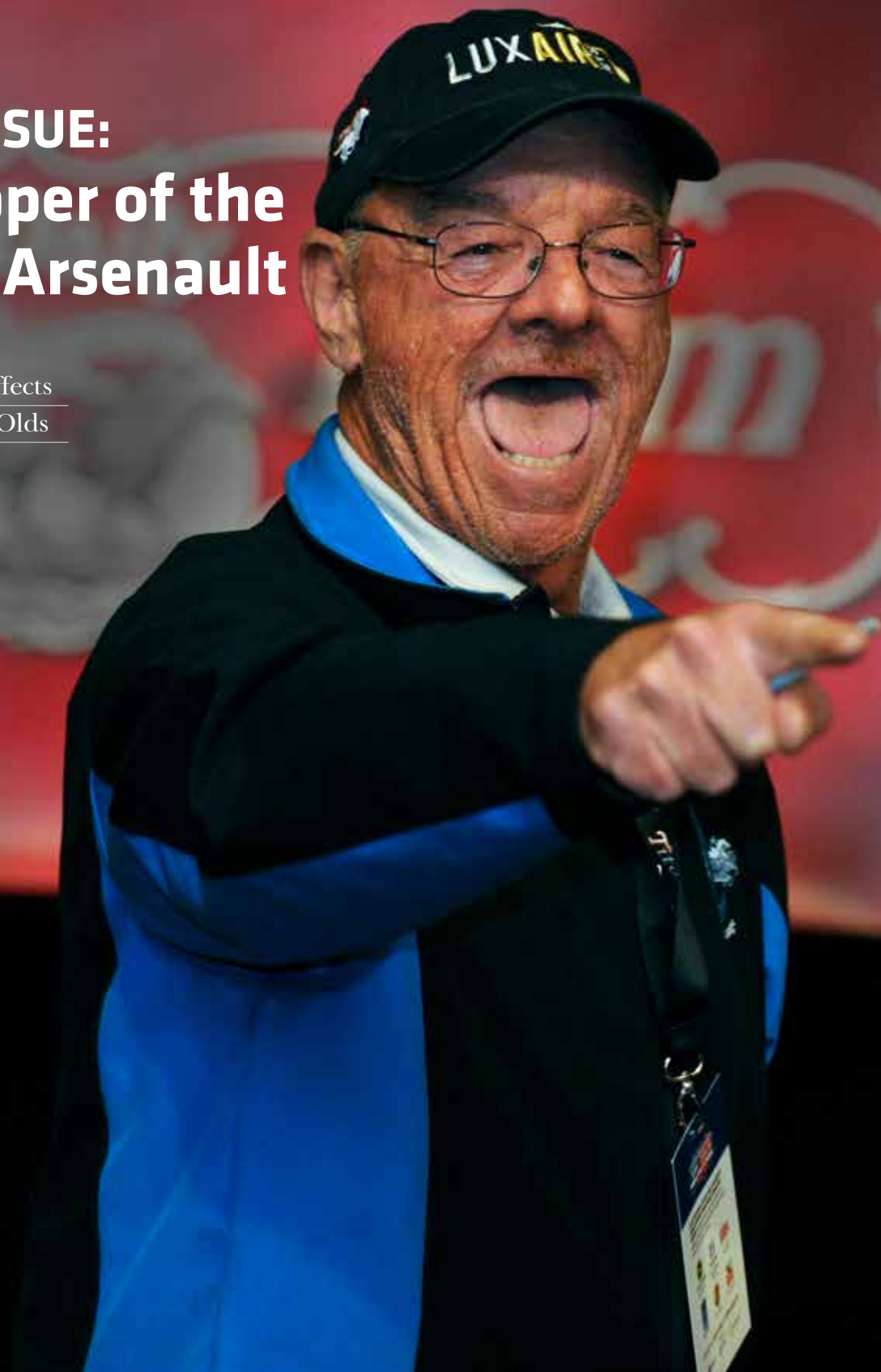
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Henry Bomze
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Allen Hakim
Publisher

Noel Michaels
Editor

Daniel Itzhaky
Graphic Designer

John Blake,
Frank Cotolo,
William F. Hudgins Jr.,
Todd Liebman,
Barry Meadow,
Noel Michaels,
Bob Pandolfo,
Ellen Parker,
Michael Sherack,
Steve Sherack,
Lauren Stich,
David Zenner
Correspondents

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747 Middle Neck Road Suite 103
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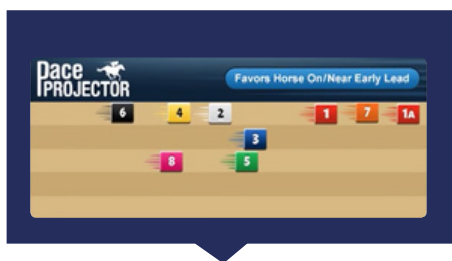


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**NATIONAL HANDICAPPING
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Railtrack Television Network • Treasure Island
January 27-29, 2017

Date: January



PAY TO THE ORDER OF: Ray Arsenault

\$ 800

Eight Hundred thousand and ⁰⁰/₁₀₀

MEMO: 2017 NHC Champion

Al. Walsh



Ray Blew Them Away at the NHC

Canadian Ray Arsenault Wins the 18th National Handicapping Championship

By Noel Michaels

HANDICAPPER RAY ARSENAULT had one of those days all horseplayers dream about – and had it at the right time – when he delivered a stone-cold beat-down on the best Thoroughbred players in the game to score a take-no-prisoners victory at the world’s biggest, and richest horse handicapping tournament ever.

The winner of the 18th annual National Handicapping Championship [NHC] was RAY ARSENAULT, a 64-year-old transportation broker and seven-time NHC qualifier from Thornhill, Ontario, near Toronto. Arsenault topped the NHC’s new record field of 654 entries to win in the prestigious annual tournament held from Friday, January 27 to Sunday, January 29, 2017 at the Treasure Island Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas.

Arsenault, a lifelong racetracker and longtime tournament enthusiast, cashed on 8 of his 18 plays on Saturday’s pivotal Day Two of the three-day NHC tournament, including a maximum-points “cap horse” plus four more double-digit winners, to vault up the standings into the lead by a margin of \$30 by the end of “moving day” Saturday. It was a lead he would never relinquish.

“I played the same way I always play,” Arsenault said after his championship was sealed. “I rarely play a horse under

5-1 and I love playing bombs because the feeling of hitting a longshot is great. Today, I happened to hit quite a few.”

After his giant Saturday, Arsenault then continued enough of a stream of wins and places on the deciding day of play on Sunday to secure the victory. Along with the win trophy, Arsenault took home the tournament’s grand prize worth \$800,000, as well as the Eclipse Award title of Handicapper of the Year that goes along with it.

Total NHC Finals purse money reached \$2,385,000, not including NHC Tour prizes and bonuses that added another \$290,000 to an overall prize-money haul for the weekend of \$2,675,000. When other prizes and bonuses are factored in, the total value of the event for horseplayers reached \$2.9 million. In the end this year, about 100 different individual players grabbed at least a small piece of that giant pot in this still-growing handicapping event, which represents a unique opportunity for horseplayers to earn big cash, recognition, and respect.

Players must qualify into the field of the NHC with a win or high finish in one of the numerous NHC Tour on-site and online qualifying contests held year-round, or by amassing cumulative points on the NHC Tour in online and

on-site handicapping events. In 2016, a total of 45 racetracks, race books, contest websites, wagering sites, and other organizations partnered with the NTRA to host qualifying contests. Arsenault had qualified for the NHC at the Del Mar Handicapping Challenge back in July.

Arsenault’s final winning three-day point total of \$407.70, based on a total of 53 mythical \$2 win-place bets, gave him a clear victory over runner-up STEVE WOLFSON JR., who finished with a total of \$361.10. The champion’s score was similar to that of 2016 NHC winner Paul Matties, who finished with \$399.50 in what was the first year of the current 53-race NHC Finals format. Six optional bets were added in 2016, and the tournament had been extended from two days to three days in 2014.

This was the fourth year of the three-day “Final Table” format at the NHC tournament. Players made 18 mythical \$2 win-and-place bets on Day One (Friday) and Day Two (Saturday) of the NHC Final, and then as many as 17 more win-and-place bets on Day Three, including 10 optional morning plays in the semi-final round, and then seven more mandatory bets in the afternoon for those that advanced to the decisive “Final Table” with the 10 highest cumulative scores to that point.

The races from all of the season's top racetracks were open for play, including Aqueduct, Fair Grounds, Golden Gate, Gulfstream, Laurel, Oaklawn, Santa Anita, and Tampa Bay Downs. Odds on all days of the NHC were capped at 20-1 (\$42) to win, and 10-1 (\$22) to place.

The starting field of 654 entries – 529 individuals including 125 players that qualified the maximum two times – was narrowed down to the top 10 percent (66 players) by the start of Sunday's third day of action, and then knocked down further to a "Final Table" of only the 10 highest-scoring players on Saturday afternoon.

Arsenault's performance should be an inspiration to any tournament player who has ever, or will ever, have a sub-par day on the first day of a multi-day contest. On Friday, the eventual winner had cashed on only 4 of his 18 plays, which put him in a non-descript position in 313th place with a \$56.50 bankroll.

"I thought I still had a chance,"

Arsenault said despite his slow start. "I got up early on Saturday morning, met by buddy Steve Thompson, and we started grinding it out."

Arsenault ended up doing a little more than "grinding it out" on Saturday. He started his day by nailing a \$100 winner, Proctor's Lodge in Race 4 at Gulfstream (odds capped to the maximum \$64 for scoring purposes), which moved him up to a \$120 total in pursuit of the Day One leader, retired New Jersey firefighter PAT NUFRIO, who'd set the pace with \$188.70 at the end of Friday.

"I had that \$100 horse that got me off the schneid to get me in the game, and the rest is history," Arsenault said. "I figured [Proctor's Lodge] should improve a little bit, and he got a perfect trip."

Arsenault added four more double-digit winners on Saturday, including Friend to Me, who returned \$24.80 in Race 9 from Fair Grounds late in the day which gave him the lead for good.

"I started feeling like maybe I have

a chance," Arsenault said at that stage of the game.

Arsenault had turned his \$56.50 Friday total into \$289.50 by the end of Saturday thanks to a massive 233-point total on "moving day." His score at that point was comfortably ahead of then second-place player DAN KOVALESKY, a 33-year-old sales rep from Shorewood, Minn., who had led for part of Saturday and ended the day with \$260.80 – nearly \$30 behind Arsenault. For the highest Day Two score, Arsenault earned a bonus entry into the 2017 Breeders' Cup Betting Challenge, a \$10,000 value.

Arsenault remained grounded, however, despite of his Saturday success.

"Where you finish [Saturday] doesn't really matter because [Sunday] is another day," Arsenault said. "Last year I was second going into the final day and I ended up 26th. Anything can happen."

Arsenault was referring to his 2016 NHC finish, which he considered "disappointing" because at one point in



Hall of Fame Bookends: NHC HoF Inductees Paul Shurman (far left) and Steve Wolfson Sr. (far right) with (L-R) Bill Shurman, Mitch Schuman, and Steve Wolfson Jr.



that tournament he had been battling it out for first.

“I wanted to get the Final Table last year but it wasn’t meant to be [last year],” Arsenault recounted. “Do you know how hard it is to get to this Final Table? It’s tough, you’re playing against 650 of the best players out there. They’re all great.”

Arsenault was determined not to repeat his 2016 fade-job and improve on the \$16,500 in prize money he settled for last year.

“When I got up in the morning, I just had a feeling that it wasn’t going to happen like last year,” Arsenault said. “I had it in the back of my mind what happened last year, but I kept saying ‘forget about it.’ My plan was to go attack the seven mandatory races at the Final Table.”

Arsenault started Sunday’s final day of competition relatively slowly with just three place finishes from his 10 optional morning bets. He was fortunate, however, that none of his closest pursuers had played any long-priced

winners that came-in that morning. Arsenault maintained his lead as the field was whittled down to the top 10 players at the decisive Final Table. At that point, just seven mandatory races stood between Arsenault and the NHC title.

In addition to Dan Kovalsky, Arsenault’s nearest challengers ended-up being 2003 NHC winner Steve Wolfson Jr. and RYAN SCHARNOWSKE of Westfield, Ind., who had a giant day on Sunday to reach the Final Table, moving all the way up to second at one point after having squeaked into the semi-final round of the top 66 with a bubble finish in 65th place on Saturday.

Soon after the start of the Final Table in just the second of seven Final Table races, Arsenault reestablished a commanding lead when he hit Peach Cove, who returned \$17 to win and \$7.20 to place in Race 4 at Santa Anita.

“I was confident, but I felt pressure for sure. You have to when you’re up against these guys,” commented Arsenault. “If they find a bomb and I don’t,

it’s a whole different game.”

The game-changer, however, belonged to Arsenault when he was the one who landed the bomb first, nailing Mr. Tickle, who returned \$27.60 to win and \$16 to place in Race 9 at Fair Grounds as the highest-paying horse in any mandatory race during the entire three-day event.

From there on out, while not mathematically assured the victory, Arsenault was essentially able to make plays to block his nearest challenger, Steve Wolfson Jr., from passing him by playing horses in the odds range that could hurt him.

In the end, Arsenault had extended his score to a final contest-winning bankroll of \$407.70, which was nearly \$40 ahead of Wolfson in second. The result was historic for both players. Ray Arsenault became Thoroughbred handicapping’s 18th Eclipse Award winner, securing the second such title by a Canadian [Brian Troop, 2010]. Steve Wolfson Jr., the 2003 winner of NHC IV, meanwhile, recorded the

highest-ever placing by a prior champion, earning the \$250,000 second prize to push his career NHC earnings total to \$355,883. Ironically, in a demonstration of how the NHC has grown, the \$250,000 second prize was significantly higher than the \$100,000 Wolfson earned when he won the title back in 2003.

Ryan Scharnowske went on to score \$320.20 to take third place and earn \$125,000. As the highest-scoring player from amongst the top 40 finishers on the 2016 NHC Tour, Scharnowske also took home a \$25,000 bonus for total earnings of \$150,000. Dan Kovalesky totaled \$308.70 and finished fifth, earning \$75,000 in purse money.

The remaining seats at the Final Table were filled by fourth-place finisher LOU FILOSO from Asbury, N.J. (scored \$309.30 and earned \$100,000), sixth-place finisher STEVE HARTSHORN

from California (\$299.40, \$65,000), seventh-place finisher JOE JARVIE from Renton Wash. (\$284.10, \$59,500), eighth-place finisher FRANK MUSTARI from Des Plaines, Ill. (\$279.40, \$54,500), ninth-place finisher DAVID BERNAL from Grand Prairie, Tex. (\$270.80, \$52,000), and tenth-place finisher MICHAEL CAPOSIO from Temecula, Calif. (\$265.40, \$50,000).

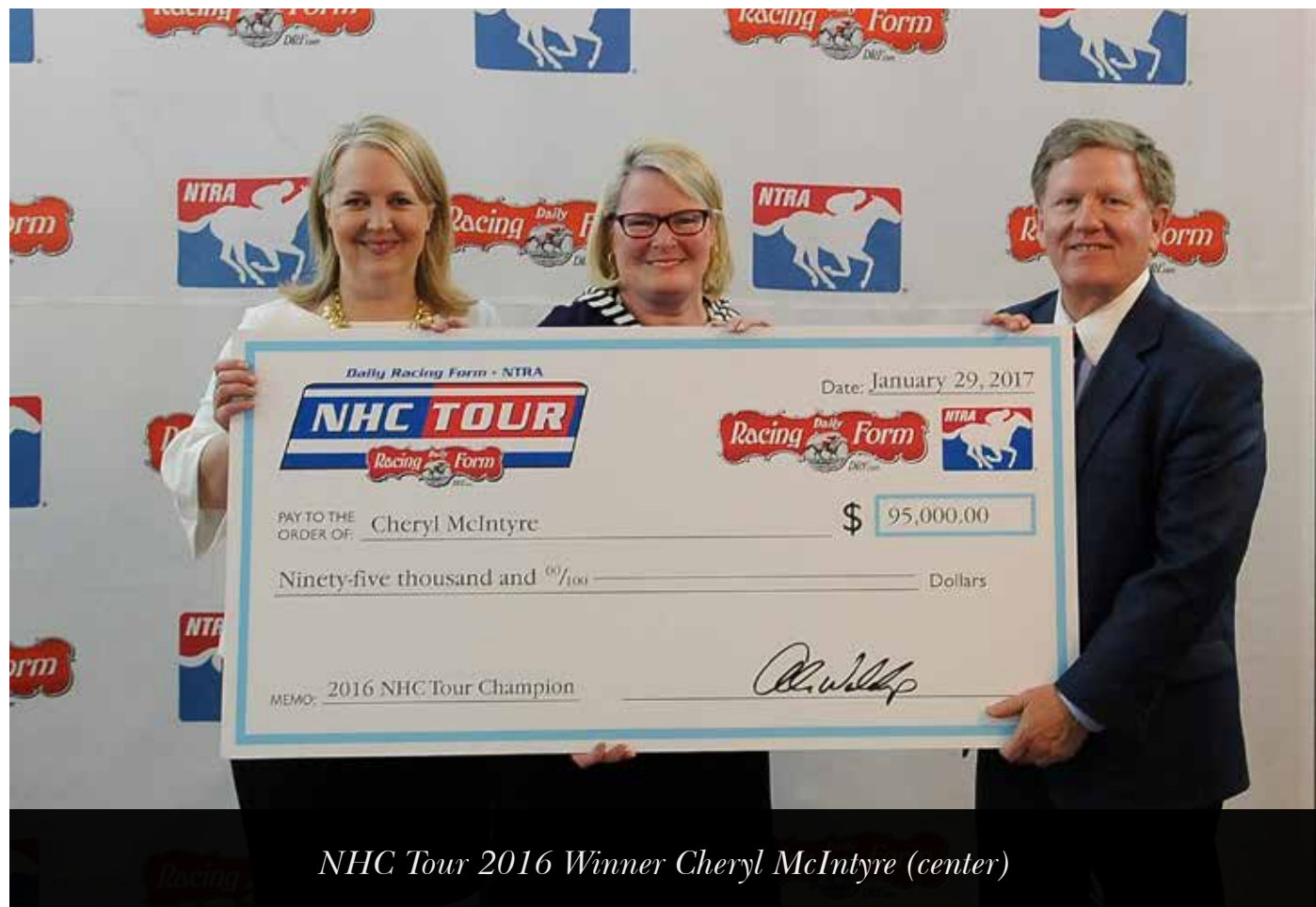
Day One leader PAT NUFRIO finished 40th and earned \$10,850. All of the finishers in the top 66 took home purse money of at least \$5,000, with everyone in the top 50 earning at least \$10,000. Notable in that group were 15-time NHC qualifier SALLY GOODALL (12th place, \$24,000) and her husband, 2008 NHC winner RICHARD GOODALL (32nd place, \$12,400), as well as 2007 NHC winner STAN BAVLISH (62nd place, \$6,200).

Speaking of past champions, including Wolfson, Bavlish and Goodall, there

were a total of nine of the 17 past NHC Finals champions and eight NHC Tour champions competing at this year's NHC. Past champions in the NHC XVIII field included 2016 defending champion PAUL MATTIES, 2015 winner JOHN O'NEIL of Huntington Station, N.Y., 2014 winner JOSE ARIAS of Bell Gardens, Calif., 2013 champion JIM BENES of Countryside, Ill., 2012 million-dollar winner MICHAEL BEYCHOCK of Baton Rouge, La., 2011 JUDY WAGNER of New Orleans, La.

The eight NHC Tour champions in the field at NHC XVIII were CHERYL MCINTYRE (2016), JONATHAN KINCHEN (2015), ERIC MOOMEY (2014), BRENT SUMJA (2013), MARK STREIFF (2012), PAUL SHURMAN (2011), TOM NOONE (2010), and BRYAN WAGNER (2009).

There were three players in the NHC XVIII field playing for seven-figure bonuses, including BCBC winner JOE



NHC Tour 2016 Winner Cheryl McIntyre (center)

APPELBAUM who was playing for a \$3 million bonus, the 2016 NHC Tour winner CHERYL MCINTYRE, who was playing for a \$2 million bonus, and Cyber Stars winner GEORGE CHUTE, who was playing for \$1 million bonus for the most points on NHCQualify.com. None of them got close to the prize, however, with Appelbaum's 515th-place finish (\$69) representing the top effort amongst the trio.

But on the other end of the spectrum was Ray Arsenault. Reflecting on his victory, and on his life growing up around the races in Toronto, Arsenault said, "I cut my teeth [at the track] when I could barely walk. I would look for programs on the ground so I could sell them for a dime to the guys coming in for the last two races."

Arsenault also mentioned both of his parents, "My dad was a \$2 bettor. He'd go to Greenwood all the time and I would tag along. We'd go down on a Saturday from the time I was in grade one, and he'd leave me to do my own thing. I started handicapping as I got older.

"Now I take my (92-year-old) mother to Woodbine every Sunday in the summer," Arsenault said when asked about the first person he called after he won. "Most of the time she picks more winners than I do."

In addition to his \$800,000, his Eclipse Award, and the BCBC spot he earned for Saturday's top score, Arsenault also automatically qualified to defend his title at next year's NHC XIX.

"I had a great experience," said Arsenault. "These people are outstanding. I've met so many good people. This is it. This is like the Super Bowl of horse racing."

The National Handicapping Championship – the "Coolest People in the World"

As the purses and stature of the NHC continues to grow, so does its support from some of the people who really matter within the world of Thoroughbred racing.

Last year, National Thoroughbred

Racing Association president and CEO Alex Waldrop called the National Handicapping Championship "One of the great success stories in horseracing, and a true celebration of the horseplayers and all they mean to our sport."

This year, NTRA COO and NHC tournament director, Keith Chamblin called the NHC "By far the single largest promotional program in Thoroughbred Racing," and continued, "We are delighted to once again host many of the pre-eminent horseplayers, and coolest people in the world."

NHC Future Book and \$100 Chips

As has become a new tradition the past few years at the NHC, all contestants in the field were treated to an expensive gift. Four years ago it was a Galaxy Tab3 tablet to everyone in attendance. The last three years including this year, the gift was a \$100 Treasure Island casino chip – as good as cash for each individual. In this case, it was a gift worth a total of \$52,900.

Another fun thing about the NHC is that the Treasure Island offers future bet odds on the players in the field to win the main event. Real odds are offered on real bets. Multi-year qualifier, all time NHC point-scoring leader, and former Final Table player DAVE GUTFREUND was the morning line favorite at 40-1. Eventual winner Ray Arsenault was 100-1, paying off \$202 on any \$2 bet.

Consolation Tournament

The morning of the third day of contest play – complete with the semi-final round cut-down to 66 players – also included a Consolation Tournament for players who missed the cut. Scores from earlier in the tournament did not carry over to the "Conso" Tournament. All players that finished Friday-Saturday between 67th and 654th places started the day fresh at \$0 and made 10 all-optional \$2 win-and-place bets on tournament track races run before 12:30 Pacific Time. The purse was \$50,000, with \$10,000 and a \$10,000 berth in the BCBC to the winner. Payoffs were made down to 20th place.

First place in the Consolation Tournament went RICK VASQUEZ, a 51-year-old attorney from Springfield, Missouri, who scored a big \$130.00 from his 10 bets to beat runner-up BYRON YABLON of Chicago, who had \$115.40.

NHC Hall of Fame Class

Two individuals were named to the NHC Hall of Fame, which was started in 2015 with a goal of inducting personalities based on their achievements and credentials from NHC tournaments over a long period of time, and/or people who contributed to the overall growth and success of the NHC tournament with indelible positive and lasting results.

The first 2017 inductee to the NHC Hall of Fame was 15-time NHC qualifier PAUL SHURMAN, a 62-year-old attorney from Dix Hills, Long Island who won the NHC Tour in 2011 and finished third in the NHC Finals in 2009.

Also inducted to the NHC Hall of Fame was STEVE WOLFSON SR., one of the fathers of handicapping tournaments as we currently know them, as well as the father of the 2003 NHC winner and 2016 runner-up finisher Steve Jr. Wolfson Sr., of Ormond Beach, Florida, has spent a lifetime involved in Thoroughbred racing on a variety of different levels.

Shurman and Wolfson join former Hall of Fame inductees, Daily Racing Form publisher Steve Crist, former NHC champion and 13-time qualifier Judy Wagner, the late NHC VII winner Ron Rippey, and the late Mike Mayo, a long-time tournament mainstay that also had served as the chairman of the NHC Players Committee.

2016 NHC Tour Results

The 2016 NHC Tour champion was CHERYL MCINTYRE of Massillon, Ohio, who earned 19,898 Tour points at contests throughout 2016 to take home the \$75,000 first prize. Additionally, McIntyre also won \$10,000 for the second half leaderboard, a BCBC entry for the first half leaderboard, and also

officially became the first qualifier to next year's finals of NHC XIX.

Along the way, McIntyre won a total of three qualifying tournaments including the Laurel Champions Tournament, the Mid-Summer Challenge at Woodbine, and an NHC Qualify contest in December. Overall NHC Tour standings were based on a player's six top point scores from the year. McIntyre's three other top point scores were earned with other high finishes on NHCQualify.com, Horsetourneys.com, and at Keeneland.

McIntyre, who plays alongside her husband, Mike, becomes the first female NHC Tour champion in its nine-year history.

RICK BROTH of the Atlanta area placed second with 19,196 Tour points and earned second-prize of \$20,000. TONY ZHOU from NYC was third with 18,698 points to earn third prize of \$15,000, plus another \$10,000 for top five during the second half.

In addition to overall prize money of \$175,000 for the final top 20 finishers, plus five \$10,000 bonuses for the second half top five finishers and five \$10,000 entries into the BCBC for the first half top five finishers, players also competed for NHC seats on the year-long NHC Tour. Any previously unqualified player who finishes in the final top 150 in NHC Tour points qualifies for the NHC Finals. This was the route taken to the championship by 2015 NHC winner John O'Neil.

Additionally, NHC Tour members competed to finish in the top 40 in the final Tour points standings to become eligible for the NHC's \$25,000 top 40 bonus, going to the highest-scoring top 40 Tour finisher in the NHC. This year, that honor, and the money, went to eventual NHC third-place finisher RYAN SCHARNOWSKE.

NHC XVII Notes

The whole story of the NHC cannot be told by only looking at the winners. The field for NHC XVIII field hailed from 42 different states including Alaska, and included 27 Canadians (including the champion Ray

NHC ROLL-CALL OF CHAMPIONS (NHC I-XVIII)

NHC	Year	Winner	Total Purse	Winners' Share	Score
I	2000	Steven Walker	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$305.40 (40 races)
II	2001	Judy Wagner	\$212,000	\$100,000	\$237.70
III	2002	Herman Miller	\$212,000	\$100,000	\$205.30
IV	2003	Steve Wolfson Jr.	\$212,000	\$100,000	\$279.60
V	2004	Kent Meyer	\$240,000	\$100,000	\$238.40
VI	2005	Jamie Michelson Jr.	\$412,400	\$200,000	\$240.40
VII	2006	Ron Rippey	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$237.20
VIII	2007	Stanley Bavlsh	\$850,000	\$400,000	\$189.20
IX	2008	Richard Goodall	\$1,017,700	\$500,000	\$272.30
X	2009	John Conte	\$962,000	\$500,000	\$228.00
XI	2010	Brian Troop	\$947,850	\$500,000	\$266.00
XII	2011	John Doyle	\$1,051,150	\$500,000	\$234.80
XIII	2012	Michael Beychok	\$1,507,003	\$1,000,000	\$238.60
XIV	2013	Jim Benes	\$1,500,000	\$750,000	\$268.40
XV	2014	Jose Arias	\$1,585,000	\$750,000	\$338.20 (3 days)
XVI	2015	John O'Neil	\$2,310,000	\$800,000	\$327.20 (3 days)
XVII	2016	Paul Matties	\$2,354,760	\$800,000	\$399.50 (3 days)
XVIII	2017	Ray Arsenault	\$2,385,000	\$800,000	\$407.70 (3 days)

Arsenault) as well as two-time NHC qualifier Leandro Tomas of Lima, Peru. The state of California had the most representatives in the NHC field with 94 individuals, followed by New York with 55 players, New Jersey with 42 players, Illinois and Florida with 26 players, Texas with 24 players, Pennsylvania with 20 players, Kentucky and Massachusetts with 18 players, and Ohio with 17 finalists.

Finalists from those 10 states plus Canada comprised 70% of the total field for NHC XVIII. The field also included players from every age group and demographic.

Part of the field once again this year were four record-setting 15-time qualifiers, who are Paul Shurman, Sally Goodall, and David "Trey" Stiles of Houston, and Robert Bertolucci of San Francisco.

The NHC was held for the sixth time at the Treasure Island Hotel & Casino, and the host property again pulled off the tournament without a hitch. Treasure Island, with its center-Strip locale, fine facilities, and commitment to customer service, has been as fine as fine a host as there ever has been in the 18 years of the NHC in Las Vegas.

"Treasure Island does a terrific job, from Phil Ruffin, the owner who is a huge racing fan and horseplayer, to

Tony Nevill, the head of the Race and Sports Book who takes such good care of horseplayers all year long. This is a terrific venue and we look forward to continuing our partnership with the TI," the NTRA's Keith Chamblin said.

Past editions of the NHC have all been held in the Las Vegas area, with hosts including MGM Grand (2000-2002), Bally's - Las Vegas (2003-2008), the off-strip Red Rock Resort (2009-2011), and Treasure Island (2012-present).

The NHC will return to the Treasure Island for its 19th renewal in 2018.

Noel Michaels is the racing media's top authority on handicapping tournaments and the National Handicapping Championship. He authored two editions of the Handicapping Contest Handbook, a Horseplayer's Guide to Handicapping Tournaments, and has reported on every National Handicapping Championship in the 18-year history of the event. He is a five-time NHC qualifier during his years of eligibility since 2010.



NATIONAL HANDICAPPING CHAMPIONSHIP XVIII RESULT CHART

Treasure Island Resort, Las Vegas, January 27-29, 2017

TOTAL NHC XVIII PURSE = \$2,385,000

Place	Player	Total	Prize money
1	Ray Arsenault **	\$399.50	\$800,000
2	Steve Wolfson Jr.	\$389.10	\$250,000
3	Ryan Scharnowske	\$340.60	\$125,000
4	Louis Filoso	\$337.30	\$100,000
5	Dan Kovalesky	\$331.80	\$75,000
6	Steve Hartshorn	\$319.40	\$65,000
7	Joe Jarvie	\$307.80	\$59,500
8	Frank Mustari	\$304.90	\$54,000
9	David Bernal	\$284.20	\$52,000
10	Michael Caposio	\$283.20	\$50,000
11	Sheldon Usprech	\$263.90	\$25,000
12	Sally Goodall	\$262.70	\$24,000
13	Michael Ray	\$262.30	\$23,000
14	Dennis Johnson	\$261.90	\$22,100
15	Eliot Honaker	\$258.30	\$20,000
16	Anthony Altomonte	\$256.20	\$19,400
17	Mitch Schuman	\$255.90	\$19,200
18	Brendan Fay	\$250.20	\$18,800
19	Kevin Jones	\$247.20	\$18,400
20	Steve Arrison	\$246.50	\$18,000
21	John Osterbauer	\$246.40	\$17,600
22	William Shurman	\$245.70	\$17,200
23	Ken Seeman	\$242.90	\$16,800
24	Cheryl Kaufman	\$241.60	\$16,400
25	Paul Matties Sr.	\$241.30	\$16,000
26	Chris Olsson	\$239.70	\$15,600
27	Chris Larmey	\$237.60	\$15,200
28	Travis Pearson	\$237.10	\$14,800
29	Peter Dresens	\$236.10	\$14,400
30t	John Nichols	\$233.70	\$13,600
31t	Gary Gristick	\$233.70	\$13,600
32	Richard Goodall	\$232.70	\$12,400
33	Matthew Rentze	\$232.40	\$12,000
34	Duke Matties	\$232.20	\$11,660
35	Harlan Malter	\$232.00	\$11,360
36	Dan Flanigan	\$231.20	\$11,200
37	George Duarte	\$230.00	\$11,040
38	Randy Bauer	\$229.60	\$10,960
39	Allan Sadler	\$227.00	\$10,900
40	Pat Nufrio *	\$222.40	\$10,850
41	Tim Downs	\$221.10	\$10,800
42	Paul Fishman	\$220.20	\$10,720
43	Shawn Heron	\$220.10	\$10,640
44	Paul Hughes	\$219.70	\$10,560
45	Thomas O'Connor	\$218.80	\$10,480
46	Gary Russell	\$217.90	\$10,400
47	Allan Schaffer	\$216.60	\$10,320
48	Gene Cahalan	\$215.50	\$10,240
49	Stephen Thompson	\$214.00	\$10,160
50	Bryan Carney	\$212.00	\$10,000
51	David Conover	\$209.60	\$9,800
52	Geoffrey Schutt	\$209.40	\$9,500
53	Kevin Willett	\$208.10	\$9,150
54t	Darrell Stanley	\$206.40	\$8,825
55t	Bobby Shoemaker	\$206.40	\$8,825
56	Jeffrey Joliffe	\$206.30	\$8,300
57	Bill Rendino	\$204.60	\$7,950
58	Jason Avila	\$203.00	\$7,600
59	Matthew Reid	\$202.80	\$7,250
60	Allan Sadler	\$202.50	\$6,900
61	Peter McFarland	\$202.10	\$6,550
62	Stanley Bavlish	\$200.50	\$6,200
63	Lawrence Bergen	\$199.40	\$5,800
64	Derek Dickson	\$199.00	\$5,460
65	Greg DuBos	\$197.80	\$5,100
66	Gwyn Houston	\$194.30	\$5,000

* Day One winner earned BCBC entry

** Day Two winner earned BCBC entry

Individual Purse Money \$2,335,000

NHC XVIII CONSOLATION TOURNAMENT

Purse = \$50,000

Day 3 – Places 67-654 eligible, Prize Money to Top 20

1	Rick Vasquez	\$130.00	\$10,000
2	Byron Yablon	\$115.40	\$7,500
3	Zachery Mcleod	\$112.80	\$5,500
4	Robert Wada	\$104.60	\$3,750
5	David Snyder	\$104.40	\$2,500
6	Traci Richards	\$101.60	\$1,900
7	Allen Harberg	\$100.40	\$1,800
8	Tim Stupka	\$98.00	\$1,700
9	Michael Goodrich	\$95.60	\$1,600
10	Joe Scanio	\$94.30	\$1,500
11	Brian Chenvert	\$92.40	\$1,450
12	Terry Armas	\$90.20	\$1,400
13t	Scott Rubinchik	\$87.60	\$1,325
14t	Edwin Synowiecki	\$87.60	\$1,325
15	Steve Turner	\$87.20	\$1,250
16	Ryan Steigmeyer	\$86.60	\$1,200
17	Michael Mulvihill	\$85.60	\$1,150
18	Ken Kasowicz	\$84.00	\$1,100
19	Jeannie King	\$83.40	\$1,050
20	John Kolodziej	\$83.20	\$1,000

Consolation Tournament Prize Money \$50,000

TOTAL NHC XVIII PURSE \$2,385,000

Top 40 Tour Bonus winner

Ryan Scharnowske \$25,000

Here are final 2016 NHC Tour full-season results down to the top 20 finishers:

Overall 2016 NHC TOUR Purse Breakdown (\$175,000 total):

<u>Place</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Tour Points</u>	<u>Prize Money</u>
1st -	Cheryl McIntyre	19,898	\$75,000
2nd -	Rick Broth	19,196	\$20,000
3rd -	Tony Zhou	18,698	\$15,000
4th -	Joseph Costello	18,545	\$10,000
5th -	Joe Pettit	18,217	\$7,500
6th -	Gary Gristick	18,132	\$7,000
7th -	Joseph Johnson	17,922	\$6,500
8th -	Garett Skiba	17,630	\$6,000
9th -	Kevin Engelhard	17,508	\$5,500
10th -	Robert Gilbert	17,225	\$5,000
11th -	Wendy Long	17,043	\$3,000
12th -	Shawn Turner	16,818	\$2,500
13th -	Eric Moomey	16,081	\$2,300
14th -	Kenneth McMahan	15,900	\$2,000
15th -	George Chute	15,757	\$1,700
16th -	Gary McMaster	15,505	\$1,400
17th -	Sally Goodall	15,399	\$1,300
18th -	Brian Gross	15,078	\$1,200
19th -	Greg Bone	14,932	\$1,100
20th -	Joe Koury	14,827	\$1,000

NHC Tour 2016 First-Half Season Results

<u>Place</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Prize</u>
1 st	Joseph Johnson	13,578	BCBC entry
2 nd	Gary McMaster	12,969	BCBC entry
3 rd	Cheryl McIntyre	12,617	BCBC entry
4 th	Rick Broth	12,555	BCBC entry
5 th	Kevin Engelhard	12,199	BCBC entry

NHC Tour 2016 Second-Half Season Results (\$50,000 purse)

<u>Place</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Prize</u>
1 st	Sam Alipio	11,267	\$10,000
2 nd	Cheryl McIntyre	10,921	\$10,000
3 rd	Joseph Costello	10,876	\$10,000
4 th	Tony Zhou	10,602	\$10,000
5 th	Robert Gilbert	10,296	\$10,000

NHC Tour 2016 "Cyberstars" Season Results (\$25,000 purse)

<u>Place</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Prize</u>
1 st	George Chute	21,484	\$10,000
2 nd	Robert Gilbert	20,773	\$6,000
3 rd	Joe Pettit	20,379	\$4,000
4 th	Joseph Costello	20,035	\$3,000
5 th	Kevin Engelhard	19,598	\$2,000

NHC Tour 2016 Rookie Leaderboard (\$15,000 purse)

<u>Place</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Prize</u>
1 st	Peter Dresens	15,904	\$5,000
2 nd	Daniel Zaretsky	8,390	\$4,000
3 rd	Richard Trobaugh	6,733	\$3,000
4 th	Cory Hodskins	3,320	\$2,000
5 th	Steve Gould	2,784	\$1,000

2014 (includes first-half prize money)

<u>Place</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Tour Points</u>	<u>Prize Money</u>
1st -	Eric Moomey	16,830	\$85,000
2nd -	Brett Weiner	16,161	\$15,000
3rd -	William Shurman	15,927	\$20,000
4th -	Jacqueline Sukanick	15,586	\$15,400
5th -	Paul Hoffman	14,956	\$5,000
6th -	Bill Wilbur	14,799	\$14,600
7th -	Anthony Kite	14,278	\$4,300
8th -	Ken Seeman	14,261	\$14,000
9th -	Sally Goodall	13,378	\$3,700
10th -	Christopher Larmey	13,150	\$3,400
11th -	Stephen McNatton	13,013	\$3,100
12th -	Sean Nolan	12,961	\$2,800
13th -	George Chute	12,748	\$2,500
14th -	Dan Flanigan	12,695	\$2,200
15th -	Mike Ferrozzo	12,601	\$2,000
16th -	Frank Polk	12,252	\$1,800
17th -	Roger Cettina	12,100	\$1,600
18th -	Sarah Wiener	11,938	\$1,400
19th -	Stephen Thompson	11,860	\$1,200
20th -	Jeannie King	11,671	\$1,000

2013 (includes partial year and bonus prizes)

<u>Place</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Prize\$</u>
1 st	Brent Sumja	20,572	\$80,000
2 nd	Mark Streiff	16,880	\$25,000
3 rd	Kevin Cox	16,392	\$12,000
4 th	Richard Grose	15,123	\$9,800
5 th	Paul Hoffman	13,070	\$9,500
6 th	Mike Ferrozzo	13,055	\$6,000
7 th	Brett Wiener	12,923	\$5,000
8 th	Curtis Meyer	12,903	\$4,000
9 th	Stephen Thompson	12,346	\$3,000
10 th	Brian Chenvert	12,271	\$2,000
11 th	Christopher Larmey	12,001	\$1,900
12 th	Kevin Engelhard	11,874	\$3,300
13 th	Cheryl McIntyre	11,488	\$1,700
14 th	Ryan Flanders	11,096	\$1,600
15 th	Gary Johnson	11,025	\$1,500
16 th	Sam Rivera	10,767	\$1,400
17 th	John Doyle	9,974	\$1,300
18 th	Charles Browning	9,597	\$2,900
19 th	Jeannie King	9,463	\$1,100
20 th	David Snyder	9,444	\$1,000
	John O'Neil		\$1,000

2012 (includes partial year and bonus prizes)

Place	Player	Points	Prize\$
1	Mark Streiff	16,853	\$102,250
2	Christopher Larmey	13,995	\$23,000
3	Mark McGuire	13,939	\$30,000
4	Curtis Meyer	13,125	\$28,500
5	Edmund Teicht	12,258	\$16,000
6	Judy Wagner	11,485	\$18,250
7	Rhonda Sylvester	10,803	\$25,000
8	Pete Sluis	10,651	\$4,000
9	Ron Rippey	10,281	\$13,000
10	Cheryl McIntyre	10,054	\$6,000
11	Bill Rendino	10,028	\$1,900
12	William Shurman	9,438	\$1,800
13	Kurt Preisigke	8,534	\$3,200
14	Eric Moomey	8,251	\$3,600
15	John O'Neil	8,228	\$1,500
16	Edye Snodgrass	8,195	\$2,900
17	Gary Johnson	8,100	\$1,300
18	Dick Mueller	7,870	\$4,200
19	Richard Grose	7,813	\$1,100
20	Paul Hoffman	7,806	\$1,000
	Jacque Hong		\$2,000
	Kenneth McMahan		\$1,250
	Ken Seeman		\$1,250
	Steve Terelak		\$1,000

2011

1	Paul Shurman	13,200	\$75,000
2	Wayne A. Collier	12,675	\$25,000
3	Christopher Skotz	11,775	\$15,000
4	Gaylord Grundy	11,600	\$7,500
5	Mary Steiff	10,350	\$2,500

2010

1	Tom Noone	11,775	\$75,000
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2009

1	Bryan Wagner	11,425	\$100,000
2	Judy Wagner	10,000	\$37,500
2t	Steve Hartshorn	10,000	\$37,500
4	Mike Labriola	9,422	\$10,000
5	Shawn Turner	9,275	\$5,000

2008

1	Sam Brooks	13,825	\$100,000
2.	Ross Gallo	11,200	\$50,000
3.	William Shurman	9,975	\$25,000
4.	James Henry	9,965	\$10,000
5.	Ricky Zimmer	9,178	\$5,000

NHC TOUR HONOR ROLL (2008-2015)**2015 NHC TOUR Purse Breakdown (includes first-half money):**

Place	Player	Tour Points	Prize Money
1st -	Jonathan Kinchen	19,026	\$75,000
2nd -	Eric Moomey	16,626	\$30,000
3rd -	Joe Jarvie	16,418	\$15,000
4th -	John Nichols	16,223	\$10,000
5th -	Ryan Flanders	16,190	\$7,500
6th -	Gary Johnson	15,955	\$17,000
7th -	Tommy Massis	15,952	\$6,500
8th -	Sean Nolan	15,821	\$16,000
9th -	Bill Shurman	15,602	\$15,500
10th -	Trey Stiles	15,437	\$5,000
11th -	Cheryl Knepper	15,396	\$3,000
12th -	James Henry	15,225	\$2,500
13th -	Stephen Thompson	15,223	\$2,300
14th -	Roger Cettina	14,825	\$2,000
15th -	Cheryl McIntyre	14,799	\$1,700
16th -	Anthony Kite	14,797	\$11,400
17th -	Brett Weiner	14,795	\$1,300
18th -	Mark Stanton	14,658	\$1,200
19th -	Bob Engelhard	14,336	\$1,100
20th -	Michael Marlaire	14,245	\$1,000



ORB

(Malibu Moon – Lady Liberty, by Unbridled)

By Lauren Stich

AGE	STARTS	1ST	2ND	3RD	EARNINGS
2	4	1	0	1	\$54,950
3	8	4	0	2	\$2,557,566

OF ALL THE GREAT THOROUGHBREDS bred by the Phipps family (and the Janneys), none – including Buckpasser, Bold Lad, Easy Goer nor Private Terms – won the Kentucky Derby. That honor solely belongs to Orb, who captured the 2013 Run for the Roses. The Winner’s Circle that afternoon was special, with Ogden Mills (Dinny) Phipps and Stuart R. Janney III representing their respective families. It also provided Hall of Fame trainer, Claude R. (Shug) McGaughey with his only Derby winner.

Orb won just one of four races at age 2 but quickly developed over the winter in Florida to capture both the Fountain of Youth Stakes and Florida Derby before winning the big prize in Kentucky. He never regained that brilliant form, however, finishing third in the Belmont Stakes and Travers Stakes.

Tail-Male Sire Line (Malibu Moon – A.P. Indy – Seattle Slew). Malibu Moon only ran twice at age 2 due to a career-ending knee injury, winning once and finishing second once. But he has established himself as a seriously good stallion. In addition to Orb, he is the sire of juvenile champion, Declan’s Moon, and major stakes winners, Devil May Care, Life at Ten, Carina Mia, etc. A.P. Indy was scratched on the morning of the Kentucky Derby as the pre-race favorite, but returned to win the Belmont Stakes and Breeders’ Cup Classic. He is now the key figure representing the Seattle Slew – Bold Reasoning – Bold Ruler sire line. Seattle Slew won the 1977 Triple Crown and attained even more respect as a spectacular 4-year-old. His place in racing history is secure.

Tail-Female Line (Lady Liberty

– Mesabi Maiden – Steel Maiden – Laughter – Shenanigans). The name Locust Hill Farm and the Janney family is most famous as the breeder/owner of Thoroughbred racing’s greatest filly – Ruffian (Reviewer). And Orb’s tail-female line descends directly to Ruffian’s dam, Shenanigans. Shenanigans also produced stakes winners, Icecapade (Nearctic) and Buckfinder (Buckpasser), as well as the good sire, On to Glory (Bold Lad) and Laughter (Bold Ruler), a three-quarter sister to Ruffian, who produced Wood Memorial winner, Private Terms, and Blue Ensign and Dover Ridge. Another daughter, Laughing Look, produced Coronado’s Quest, Warning Glance, and Military Look.

How to bet Orb’s offspring: Orb’s babies should be most effective as late-blooming juveniles when they begin stretching out around two turns, and as 3-year-olds, unless they are out of mares by known speed influences.

Representative 2-year-olds by Orb:

ALL SYSTEMS GO, colt gets high speed from dam, Just Louise (by high-speed sire, Five Star Day), who won the Debutante Stakes at age 2. This is one Orb baby who should develop early and have good speed.

DILIOS, colt is out of a Medaglia d’Oro mare, and he descends from the same female family as Shenanigans, Orb’s fifth dam.

DOMAIN, colt may be the best-bred of all of Orb’s first-crop foals. He is out of Pleasant Home, a 9 ³/₄-length winner of the Breeders’ Cup Distaff and a full sister to stakes winner, Country Hideaway and the outstanding broodmare,

Matlacha Pass (dam of Point of Entry and Pine Bluff).

EARTH, colt should have good speed and be precocious at 2 as he’s out of a full sister to stakes-winning sprinter, Bridgetown. Third dam, Empress Ally, is a full sister to Kentucky Derby winner, Strike the Gold.

MY DREAM, colt is out of Snooze (Forestry), a half-sister to Imagining. Second dam, stakes winner, Daydreaming, is a full sister to stakes winners, Accelerator, Girolamo and two top broodmares, She’s a Winner (dam of Bluegrass Cat) and Supercharger (dam of Super Saver).

OCULIST, filly is out of a half-sister to the Janney’s stakes winner, Data Link (War Front).

ORBATRON, colt is out of a Smart Strike mare and second dam is multiple stakes winner, Urbane.

SO LIVELY, filly is out of Beat the Drums, a Smart Strike mare out of champion 2-year-old filly, Storm Flag Flying.

(Beginning her career in racing at The Morning Telegraph in 1970, Lauren Stich was the longtime pedigree handicapper and bloodlines columnist for Daily Racing Form, and has written for The Racing Times, American Turf Monthly, Today’s Racing Digest and Breederscup.com. She was founding member and pedigree analyst/columnist for Gradeoneracing.com, and was the founding racing and bloodlines editor for Horse Society Magazine. Stich is the author of “Pedigree Handicapping,” “Bet With the Best,” and “Bet With the Best 2: Longshots” and has been featured in seminal handicapping books by James Quinn, Steve Davidowitz and many other prominent Thoroughbred authors. She was also a bloodstock consultant for trainer, Michael Dickinson. She can be reached at lstich@aol.com).





TIMING

\$2 QUINELLA

\$2 EXACTA

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TAMPA BAY DERBY

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TAMPA BAY
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Following the Tampa Route to Kentucky

Tampa Bay Derby a Key Route to Success in the Blue Grass and Beyond

By Michael Sherack

THE IMPORTANCE AND STRENGTH OF the Tampa Bay Derby has grown dramatically in recent years. STREET SENSE, the 2007 winner of the signature race at Tampa Bay Downs, famously became the race's first participant to win the Kentucky Derby, and SUPER SAVER, third three years later, also proved best on the first Saturday in May at Churchill Downs.

A look at the race's history shows plenty of winners of quality, such as Reinvested (1982), Phantom Jet (1987), Champagneforashley (1990), and Parade Ground (1998), and the race's popularity has grown since it was granted Grade 2 status for the 2011 edition. The last five editions have been captured by some of the game's top trainers: Todd Pletcher, three times and a record four in total; Mark Casse, and Graham Motion. Pletcher's Destin set a track record of 1:42.82 for the 1 1/16-mile distance over the main track last year.

This year's Grade 2, \$350,000 Tampa Bay Derby will be run on Saturday, March 11, and likely draw a relatively full field of quality runners. The last five runnings have seen a total of 47 participants, and don't be surprised to see a field size above that average this year.

Destin's sixth-place finish in the Kentucky Derby last year was the best finish of any of the last five Tampa Bay Derby winners, with four having run at Churchill Downs. Of course, the Kentucky Derby is not an easy race to win, and a closer look at the recent Tampa Bay Derby winners does show they were horses of quality that achieved in other races.

DESTIN went to the post at odds of 18-1 in the Kentucky Derby and went winless in four starts following

the Tampa Bay Derby, but did finish second, beaten only a nose, in the Belmont Stakes and also accounted for a third-place finish in the Jim Dandy at Saratoga.

CARPE DIEM in 2015 won the Blue Grass following the Tampa Bay Derby and had plenty of support in Kentucky at 7.70-1, and could do no better than 10th. Unfortunately, he never raced again.

RING WEEKEND did not race in the Kentucky Derby in 2014, and settled for fifth in the Preakness. He went on to become a multiple graded stakes winner, captured the Grade 1 Kilroe at Santa Anita, and has a record of 5-3-0 from 15 starts since his win at Tampa Bay.

VERRAZANO in 2013 followed his Tampa Bay Derby win with a score in the Wood Memorial and had plenty of support at Churchill Downs at 8.70-1, and finished 14th. He was a horse of quality who went on to win the Grade 1 Haskell and Grade 3 Pegasus and also finished second in Group 1 company at Royal Ascot. He posted a 3-1-2 mark from 10 starts following his Tampa Bay Derby win.

In 2012, PROSPECTIVE was best in the Tampa Bay Derby. He went post-ward at nearly 58-1 in the Kentucky Derby and finished 18th, and ultimately proved a useful sort with three more wins from 10 starts, including a score in the Grade 3 Ohio Derby.

Horses who raced in the Tampa Bay Derby in recent years have generally fared well in follow-up starts. In fact, three of the last five runnings have produced the winner of Keeneland's important Blue Grass Stakes.

BRODY'S CAUSE, seventh last year, scored in the Blue Grass and returned \$10.40. CARPE DIEM lived up to

favored billing (\$2.80) in the Blue Grass following his Tampa Bay Derby score two years ago. JAVA'S WAR, runner-up in 2013, captured the Blue Grass and paid \$11.20.

In addition to Brody's Cause, last year's renewal produced three other next-out winners: OUTWORK, second, captured the Wood Memorial; AWESOME BANNER, eighth, won the Big Cypress Stakes; and ECONOMIC MODEL, last of nine, won an optional allowance and followed it with a score in the Easy Goer Stakes.

The 2015 running produced the Lexington Stakes winner in DIVINING ROD (third in Tampa Bay Derby), and DANZIG MOON, fourth behind Carpe Diem in the Tampa Bay Derby, rounded out the Blue Grass exacta at long odds.

If you are taking the Triple Crown trail seriously, be sure to tune in to the Tampa Bay Derby, as well as the supporting card. Last year, Tampa Bay hosted three graded stakes on the day and produced its record total pari-mutuel handle for one program. The twelve-race total wagered of \$12,250,446 was up 11.8% from the high set on the same day five years prior.

This year's Tampa Bay Derby undercard also includes the Grade 2, \$200,000 Hillsborough Stakes and Grade 3, \$200,000 Florida Oaks, both on turf.

More than a fair share of the game's top turf performers have competed at Tampa Bay Downs in recent years. Stephanie's Kitten, Tepin, and Zagora were all stakes winners over the Tampa Bay Downs turf course and ultimately named Eclipse Award winners.





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William F. Hudgins Jr.'s
NORTH AMERICAN TURF

There are numerous traits that top-quality Thoroughbred turf horses possess which elevate them above the norm. Determination and stamina come immediately to mind, particularly at the distances stretch out over the lawn. Handicappers capable of discerning hints of these two positive attributes from the past performance lines of a given grass competitor put themselves in line for frequent trips to the mutuel windows to deservedly collect on their astuteness. Recent displays of prolonged late speed – gaining ground/running positions from the pre-stretch call to the finish are solid indicators of good stamina. It's an extra bonus if these efforts were displayed over similar or longer distances than that of today's contest. Determination is a bit trickier to ascertain but I like seeing running lines that include gains or maintaining position while under pressure – running less than a length either ahead or behind an battling on for at least on full call. The more instances such as these within the top four/five races clearly point to a grass mammal with an iron constitution, regardless what level at which it may have been competing. I've seen many instances where well-placed infielders with recent displays of both stamina and determination step up handily in class and get the job done with authority while rewarding those with a little faith in their abilities handsomely. A bit of food for thought. Good handicapping rascals!

"hudg"

**North America's Top Fifteen Turf Routers
(9-1/2 Furlongs And Longer)**

- #1 Da Big Hoss – Much expected from this first-class professional turfer.
- #2 Wake Forest (Ger) – Some outstanding efforts going long last year.
- #3 Ashleyvvsugar – Formidable stayer loves Santa Anita and Del Mar.
- #4 Money Multiplier – Solid pro can compete with the best of 'em when on.
- #5 Kaigun (Can) – Heads into the new year as the ranking top stayer.
- #6 Bullards Alley – Everything in place for a really good 2017 campaign.
- #7 Bigger Picture – Has the look of a mighty fine turf stayer; Nice infielder.
- #8 World Approval – Loves firm courses and will thrive out West.
- #9 Deauville (Ire) – Youngster from Europe made waves here last year.
- #10 Kasaqui (Arg) – Admirably handling his assignments against this level.
- #11 Texas Ryano – Fits with the good turf mammals – needs clever handling.
- #12 The Pizza Man – Hoping to see this one crank it up this season.
- #13 Grand Tito – Pops up rock-solid efforts versus top infield stock when right.
- #14 Si Sage (Fra) – Legitimate contender at the elite level; Warrants respect.
- #15 Generosidade (Uru) – The longer the better for this one.

Grass Routers To Watch Over North American Courses...

BONNIE ARCH – Has taken to the turf with aplomb; Climb aboard.
BOW TIE AFFAIR – Tactical speed makes him tough vs. \$25k-20k infielders.
CAMY AWARD – Finally coming to hand over the green; Follow closely.
CZARMO – LONGSHOT – On his game and worth a flyer.
DEFYING GRAVITY – Strong stalking style elevates her stock; Gets it done.
ENTERPRISING – Comes calling late with authority when he's right.
ESCALANTE – Harty may well have a nice turf filly in this lass.
FAIR PROSPECT – Essentially a mid-range claimer but don't take lightly.
FOREVER PLUS – Nicely-bred daughter of U S Ranger loves to win on the lawn.
GRANNY'S KITTEN – Yet another of Kitten's Joy's turf loving offspring; Watch.
LEMON ROYAL – Strolls along late to grab a minor award; Don't overlook.
LITTLEMISSPERFECT – More than a rogue longshot if well-spotted.
MOBILEDIXIE – Excellent early lick sets this mare up for turf sprinting.
NICHE – Doesn't score much but can fill a nice exotic ticket.
PARLAY PONTI – Fits the lower-level grass sellers nicely; Consistent enough.
RED PARASOL – On that pesky "every-other-race" roller coaster; Hmmm...
SCHWEETS – Been awfully consistent over his past few outings; Interesting.
TWO STEP TIME – BEST BET – There's talent buried within this colt – patience!
VOW ME OVER – Kentucky-bred racemare in very good racing trim at this time.
WESTERN RESERVE – Black-type stakes winner over the sod now; Sharp.

AQUEDUCT

ACKARET: Set a solid pace down inside on a dead track that favored rally wide horses. Worth a try at a nice price off claim by low-profile barn.

COOKIE CRISP: Rudy first starter missed the break to spot the field four lengths at the start, but ran well enough thereafter and lost the race by only about the same margin. Live overlay off that fourth-place debut finish.

DESIROUS: Shouldn't attract a ton of attention at the windows based on very distant runner-up finish, but ran a solid race despite a rough start in first start in six months since last being seen at Indiana. Set to graduate.

DUBLIN MY MONEY: Ready to go up a notch off the claim after rallying off a slow pace for place when needing a race in first start since The Spa. Double your money.

FAIR REGIS: First starter attempted to close from 11th in debut after racing inside on a slow rail much of the race. Ready to graduate off the claim by Jeremiah Englehart.

FRAT STAR: Crushed the field as much the best despite getting bottled up in traffic through much of the stretch run. Likely repeater.

GROTON ST SCOUT: Unlucky to get caught late as the last surviving member of the pace. Should be a maiden much longer.

KING OF ANYTHING: Out of town invader was totally discarded at giant odds, but belongs vs. the local claimers based on fourth-place effort, just a nose out of third despite slow start off a 180-day layoff.

LENNY: Suffered from the inside speed trip and emptied out early on an outside rally-wide day. Give him a chance to rebound.

PAX IN TERRA: Won the battle for place, beaten less than a length in a tough spot in return from a 3 1/2-month layoff. Looks good vs. similar.

QUINCY GIRL: Well-bet first starter has speed but got hooked in three-length-gap duel and had to settle for show behind perfect-trip closers. Dangerous speed vs. mdn. claimers.

RESILIENT ONE: Slow start in comeback from a three-month layoff and chased from behind on a dead rail. Toss out the return loss and go again.

SPECIAL RISK: Chased a horse that shook loose up front and was getting to that one at the finish when 10 lengths clear of the third horse. Set to graduate vs. maiden claimers.

SPECTACULAR FLASH: Raced down inside on the bad part of the track when needing a race off a three-month layoff. Finished off the board but is ready to improve vs. similar.

STORMY PRINCESS: Set a pressured pace down inside on a day the outside was good, and got caught only by the 4-5 favorite while four lengths clear of the rest.

VINCENZO: Broke a length behind the field and had too much ground to recover chasing some good horses. Worth one more chance.

BEST BET: ONECATS CHANCE: Finished third as the best horse in the race thanks to a butcher-job Esquivel ride, getting beat to a spot on the backstretch, getting shuffled back to last when full of run on the turn, angling wide to lose ground, and ultimately running out of stream after the magical mystery tour. Just needs better ride.

LONGSHOT: RISE TO THE OCCASION: Got wiped out when interfered with at the top of the stretch. Finished sixth, fifth via DQ, and was less than a length out of third with several lengths worth of trouble.

GULFSTREAM PARK

ALL ABOUT DIVA: Got bumped off-stride at the break, then rushed up to the lead but emptied out back to ninth due to the early effort. Try again as likely overlay.

AMERICAN TZAR: Underrated third-place finish was behind a loose lone speed runaway winner and an odds-on favorite after this horse broke poorly and rushed up to press the solo leader in a dirty-work trip.

ELLOREE GAL: Got wiped out when interfered with into the stretch, and was not persevered with thereafter. Toss that out and go again.

ENTWISTLE: Closed strong when clear but didn't get through unscathed, caught behind horses inside turning for home. The traffic cost him the race, losing by a neck and a head.

EVA LONDON: Fended off multiple challengers including the 3-5 favorite, but was softened up just enough to get caught late by a perfect-trip stalker.

JAMIE'S DANCER: Didn't get a great start, then had a bit of traffic on the turn when chasing a front-running even-money shot. Settled for second and looks good in next.

KISMET'S HEELS: Settled for third after getting checked back sharply and losing momentum when interfered with in the stretch.

LAST LIGHTNING: Missed the break to spot the field several lengths and lose all chance at the start. Can rebound with a clean start off the Chuck Simon claim.

MAD PATRIOT: Better than bad-trip sixth-place finish indicates after breaking poorly in last and then failing to get through a hole on the backstretch. Worth another shot.

MARITIME PULPIT: Had just moved into contention at a good price when forced to check out of it, losing all chance when impeded.

PRETTY CITY DANCER: Needed a race off a five-month layoff but ran a solid second in the Forward Gal. Ready to turn the tables.

PRINCESS VICTORIA: Finished fifth, 4th via DQ, when crunched down inside by an errant rival. Can upset with a clean trip.

RICH MOMMY: First starter made a big wide move to avoid mud in her face and ran well only to lose by a slop-loving front-runner. May not remain a maiden for long.

TALK LESS: Broke a step slow in a beginning that cost him dearly in a race he lost by a head. Ready to graduate for new barn off the claim.

TIZ THE SOUND: Had a terrible trip on the first turn and again in the stretch when third - should have been second - last time out. Set to graduate vs. bottom turf maidens.

TOTAL JOINT: Took-up sharply in tight traffic and couldn't hold off the favored closer in a game try for second. Just needs clear sailing.

TROPICAT: Broke a step slow to start last in 10-horse field, then rushed up but couldn't catch the 6-5 chalk and wire-to-wire winner to be third, beaten less than a length.

VENTINA: Jockey butcher-job loss at even-money, losing ground 5-6 wide on both turns chasing at 7 1/2F on turf. Better luck in next.

BEST BET: MIDNIGHT TALE: Got pinched back at the break in well-bet debut, and the best she could do was 2nd behind a runaway winning 6-5 chalk. Her turn next time.

LONGSHOT: FAST FIRE: Was making the same, or better, move as the eventual winner, but instead of getting through, this horse got checked sharply in traffic and settled for fifth. Don't overlook nice price.

GOLDEN GATE

ACE DEUCE: Pressed the pace in a race that set-up for the closers and ran best of the speeds for fourth, a nose out of third. Dangerous live overlay off the claim.

BETTER IN LEATHER: Lost the rider when she hit a fallen rival. Toss out the DNF and try again as a potential overlay.

DEB'S WILDCARD: Finished fourth, just a nose out of third when not beaten by a lot in return from nearly a 1 1/2-year layoff. Prepped and ready.

EXCENTRA: Needed a race off a four-month layoff and was the only closer to make a dent for third behind a pair of runaway front runners at 5 1.2F. Try again.

EXIT SIXTY SLEW: Bobbled at the start when wanting to show better tactical speed and was in last all the way to the stretch before rallying to lose by less than a length. Worth another shot.

HELLACIOUS HADLEE: Got hooked and cooked in an eight-length-gap speed duel. Held third while 10 lengths ahead of the early challenger and looms dangerous speed vs. maiden claimers.

LAWYERSGUNS'N'MONEY: Showed good speed but needed a race off a year layoff and missed by a neck. His turn next time.

LOST IN LEXINGTON: Just missed closing for second by a neck in 5 1/2F return from a three-month layoff. Ready now in return from the sidelines.

BEST BET: THE DANDY MAN CAN: Ran a big effort just for third after checking when interfered with early in the race to lose four lengths, which was more than the eventual margin of defeat when placed second via DQ. Just needs a clean trip to graduate.

LONGSHOT: TOUGH EMBLEM: Missed the break and spotted the field three lengths to lose all chance at the start. Just needs a clean start to improve off fifth-place finish.

SANTA ANITA

CEEME RUN WILD: Battled it out with two challengers up front and held on for a close third after both pace rivals chucked it to last and next-to-last.

DAVID'S MEMORY: Battled for the lead in return from a five-month layoff and ran a bang-up race to hold off a slew of closers for the maiden win. Looks good up at the next level.

DOMESTIC VINTAGE: Finished sixth as the favorite, but only 1 1/2 lengths out of second after an uncomfortable stretch run in traffic. Can make amends.

JOHANN'S COMMAND: Started slow and lost ground four wide on the first turn when chasing the pace, and lost the race by a neck and a head when third. Knocking on the door vs. maiden claimers.

KY. COLONEL: Chased a loose lone speed horse in first outing since Del Mar and outran 16-1 odds for second while ahead of the 4-5 favorite. Ready to roll.

MYSTICAL IMAGE: Got caught in a three-way duel for the lead and held on best of the speeds for a clear third behind a perfect set-up pair of stalker/closers.

OH MARVELOUS ME: Got caught in a six-length-gap speed duel and held on well for second. Ready to shake loose up front.

PATH OF EXILE: Overlooked first starter ran a nice race for third after starting slow when not handling the rail draw. Just needs to get off the rail post.

PLANE LUCKY: Dueled for the lead in fast splits and held on best for second again. Looms a threat to shake loose up front.

SHEER FLATTERY: No dice from too far behind a moderate pace after losing ground chasing four wide on the first turn in the Robert Lewis. Can rebound.

SHEZA FIRSTSAMURAI: Got hooked in an extended three-length-gap speed duel and held on best for second behind only a perfect-trip stalker.

SYMPOSIUM: Foreign invader missed the break and got no pace to chase from last in US debut off a four-month layoff. Try again.

ZINVOR: Got KO'd in a duel in an off-the-turf race in first race back from a three-month layoff. Too early to give up.

BEST BET: RYE PATCH: Needed some time to shake loose from an early three-way, four-length-gap speed duel in blazing turf route fractions, and the duel ended up costing him the race. Held on for second in a big effort and will get back to the winner's circle in next.

LONGSHOT: SYNTAX: Artificial track invader off a layoff outran a 6-5 favorite with the same running style to be third in a turf route. Just needs a decent pace to chase.

PENN NATIONAL

CIRCUS MUSIC: Gained second behind easy winner when beaten at odds-on in her first try with winners most recently; takes measure of similar for strong Bernie Houghton barn (19% wins last year).

DIAMOND DON: Chased and gave out from wide spot to finish fifth when stretched to two turns for his latest; benefits from experience, but likely to cut back to sprints again.

FIRST DANCE: Showed needed improvement with rally for place award when making her second start back from brief break most recently; another forward move in the cards now.

PAYTON'S VICTORY: Put in good late rally up the inside over good ground in his latest, and was along for fourth; 10YO veteran commands respect having finished on the board in 41 of 81 career starts.

VAN PERSIE: Moved best late when along for second on appropriate drop back to claiming ranks for his latest; solid veteran with more than \$200k earned belongs on your tickets.

BEST BET: MAIN TRACK ONLY: Chased from second throughout her latest, and just couldn't match winner; moves up when back for third start of current form cycle.

LONGSHOT: JUSTGIMMEAKISS: Chased from a distance while between rivals and gave out to fifth in her latest; more dangerous if able to get spot on or near pace from outset.

PARX

ALAAPATIQUE: Raced with the pace on stretch to one-mile trip for his latest, shook free, and held margin for nice score in his second start back from brief break; takes another.

CLOWNEY: Cut back to seven-furlong trip off a series of route races when in from AQU for his latest, and could only manage a fair third; on the board in 14 of 27 career starts, he has more to give.

IN CONDITION: Set a clear pace, drifted in, and held gamely for second when beaten a length in his first start back from two-month break most recently; hard to ignore with similar at NW2L level next time.

KENDRICKS: Dropped to claiming ranks for his latest, chased, and weakened to fourth; note, gelding turned back to one-turn race and can be sharper next time for winning John Servis barn.

SISTER PATRICIA: Gave good account for third with front wraps and Lasix added on stretch in distance for her first start since late-December; maiden score shouldn't be far off now.

BEST BET: JACAPO: Took noteworthy class drop for his latest, broke slow, moved up to give chase, and weakened to finish fourth over wet ground (one-for-seven in career on wet tracks); follow off \$7,5k-claim for strong J. Ness barn.

LONGSHOT: PURIM'S GOLD: Dueled on the rail when under gun from rail post position draw at one-mile trip most recently, and weakened to fourth in acceptable try; try again.

TURFWAY PARK

ANOTHER SOURCE: Broke poorly and trailed the field early, but managed to close for second in sprint prep career debut. Won't be a maiden for long.

BLACK TAVISH: Got hooked in a three-way, 2 1/2-length-gap speed duel and lost as a result. Finished best of the speeds for second and should shake loose up front in next.

CIVIL DISPUTE: Got hooked in a seven-length-gap speed duel and held on well under the circumstances to be third beaten a length. Looms a threat to shake loose up front.

CONTRASTING: Acted up and broke through the gate before the start, then didn't run her best effort that day. Worth another try.

FOREST WARRIOR: Well bet but broke slow at 5F and lost his best chance. Too early to give up on him.

GRETSIE: Broke a step slow when wanting to show better speed and had to make a mid-race move but couldn't sustain it in first race off a six-month layoff. Try again.

I'LL GIVE YOU WAR: Got hammered and wiped-out at the start and actually did well to recover for fourth, less than two lengths out of second behind a runaway winner. Don't ignore vs. maiden claimers.

MAXAINTASAIN: Missed the break to trail far off the pace early, but was the only closer in the race to make a run to be distant second behind a runaway 2-5 favorite. Worth another try.

PROUD MISSION: Made a move but flattened out when needing a race off a nine-month layoff. Fits well here vs. similar competition.

WEAVERS ICE GOLD: Tamps invader went down in flames as a favorite after getting off last in a disastrous break when not handling the rail draw. Can make amends if able to get off the rail post.

BEST BET: SIVA: Unbelievable bad luck in front-running second-place finish, getting carried out by a loose horse down to the stretch to lose his chance. Can rebound.

LONGSHOT: MYSTIC JOY: Outran 20-1 odds as the longest shot on the board to rally for a distant second behind a runaway 2-5 shot despite trailing the field early after a horrible start. Don't overlook.

TAMPA BAY DOWNS

ALLIE'S EVENT: Needed a race off a nine-month layoff and closed from last to be second as the only late runner to make a dent. Stick with her.

BALLINSKELLINGS: Stumbled badly at the start as the eventual winner went out to an easy uncontested lead. Missed second by a nose and just needs a clean start.

BILL'S WEALTHYGIRL: Overbet in return from a long layoff and closed from last-to-second in 5 1/2F return race. Prepped and ready to graduate.

LIMEHOUSGAS: Took the initiative to rush up and duel with the leading 4-5 favorite and faded to third thanks to the dirty-work trip vs. the odds-on favorite. Ready to break case of third-itis.

MIZZENMYHONEYMOON: Exits a z-pattern third-place effort, outrunning 18-1 odds to just miss second by a neck after dueling early, dropping back, and then rallying late in a race where the other early speeds tired badly.

ROLLIN WITH OLIN: Accompanied the leader with a four-length-gap back to the rest of the field and just missed second by a nose behind a pair of perfect-trip stalkers. Can rebound.

TIZK TIZK: Percolated into a two-length-gap speed duel after being softened up early and couldn't hold off the winner while five lengths clear in second. Can make amends.

BEST BET: ZOEY D: Dueled for the lead and lost only to the perfect set-up even-money favorite. Worth another shot.

LONGSHOT: SUPERMANS CAPE: Bumped at the start, dueled inside in tough 7F fractions, and stayed on best of the speeds to be third. Still a threat to shake loose up front.

OAKLAWN

APPREHENDER: Veteran broke slowest to begin at an immediate disadvantage in a tough spot behind a wire-to-wire winner. Beat the 2-5 favorite for third and shouldn't be ignored.

BIG DINNER: Knifed out of traffic to come with a big rally until running out of real estate to the first finish line and settle for third. Prepped and ready off the seven-month layoff.

CASTLETOWN: Got hooked in a four-length-gap speed duel and outlasted the challenger for third. Dangerous speed vs. the local competition.

CONQUEST HIHOSILVER: Got a prep under his belt in return from a 2 1/2-year layoff, and wasn't embarrassed, finishing only three lengths out of second. Stick with this guy.

DELTA CHANCE: Bumped and steadied at the start to begin last in a 12-horse field, but closed the gap throughout the race for third. Can win with a better break.

LIPAN: Battled two separate pace challengers when dueling to the top of the stretch, and was softened up enough to be unable to hold off the winner. Can make amends.

MESOMA: Got pinched back to last at the start, but then advanced though and around traffic on the turn and hit the board again for second. Knocking on the door at present.

PLAYING A JOKE: Outran 17-1 odds as the only late-runner to make a dent from far back for third in first race back from a 70-day layoff. Don't overlook.

SMOKIN NOW: Emptied out in a three-way, 2 1/2-length-gap duel for the lead. Can shake loose up front and go all the way as a live overlay.

YOU VOW ME: Got caught in a 2 1/2-length-gap speed duel in return from a three-month layoff and outlasted the early challenger by six lengths en route to a third-place finish, just a neck out of second. Try again.

ZIP VAN WINKLE: Caught in a three-way speed duel and stubbornly settled for third. Worth one more try.

BEST BET: QUICK SAND: Chased a loose wire-to-wire winner and was five lengths the best of the rest in second. In fine form and ready to win for new barn off the claim.

LONGSHOT: SWAMP RULER: Bothered at the start to begin near the back in return from a four-month layoff, but ran well for third, just a length out of second behind a runaway winner. Just needs a clean start.

FAIR GROUNDS

CALAMITY JANE: Had two-race win streak snapped when a narrowly beaten third with late rush in her most recent start, only her second try since last-August; five-time winner with upside now.

DISCREET SPY: Raced wide and couldn't mount a rally when eighth on switch to turf for first attempt with winners off a two-month break most recently; worth following for trainer D. Pish (19% wins last year).

K C'S CALL: Put in sustained run to post upset score in his first start back from brief respite; capable of holding good form now.

NATHAN'S TIZZY: Had wide trip and managed a good fourth in his first start since last-November, and just his second start since last-August; lightly raced gelding with an upside.

SHARP CLARK: Battled throughout and stayed on to finish a game second in his first attempt with winners most recently; keeps solid form now.

BEST BET: MY PROPHET: Broke slow, put in big middle move to reach contention, was bumped and wide turning for home and gave out to eighth; has been hurt by time off, so relatively quick return could prove key.

LONGSHOT: LIP SERVICE: Broke slow and didn't have the best racing luck in fourth-place finish behind easy winner in his most recent start; another chance at square ticket with similar.

DELTA DOWNS

HIT TOP SPEED
K J R SOARING STAR
MARGARET'S SONG
PAYDEN CASH
SONGFORTHEOFFICER

STIHL HARBOR
TAPNOW
TATUMTOWN
THECLASSPRAYER
TOBIT

SUNLAND PARK

BULLFIGHT
DANI'S RING
DOM CAT
FORGIVESSIS PWR
FULL SUN
IMA HAPPY STRIKE

IZA DIABOLIC DUDE
LIL BIT OF THUNDER
MR ICE PICK
PRIDE OF NAVARONE
SMACK RIDGE
TILLA CAT

LAUREL PARK

BOB'S MY UNCLE: Took noteworthy class drop for well-meant try in his latest, but couldn't make much of a late impact from a wide spot behind a soft pace and settled for fourth; another try.

GATOR BOY: Stumbled at the break and made up some ground to finish a respectable fourth when cut back to six-furlong trip for his latest; figures sharper for experience, and gets another chance.

LETMEBETHE ONE: Shot free on the pace and gave out to finish fifth of six when in with winners for the first time off maiden win at PEN; moves forward.

NEVER STOP LOOKING: Rated, rallied, and held late to score by 1 ¼ lengths most recently, his second win from three starts since back from 2 ½-month break; veteran with \$400k earned packs a punch.

PERFECT GAME CAIN: Rated, rallied wide, and gave out to finish fourth behind blowout winner in his latest; another shot with similar group for winning K. Nations barn (20% wins last year).

BEST BET: MECKE'S MADALYN: Tried to gain from behind a soft pace and finished a distant fifth behind dominant winner in her latest; on the board in half of her 12 career starts, and capable of better.

LONGSHOT: INCLUDE GOLD: Moved wide and between rivals to contend in her latest and then finished evenly for fourth in good try at long odds; can still offer value for strong K. Magee barn (22% wins last year).

HAWTHORNE

B N A NATIVE GIRL: Unlucky to still be a maiden after getting hooked up front and setting the race up perfect for the 3-5 favorite. Dangerous speed vs. maiden claimers.

BYLIA: Broke poorly to start far back in last, yet rallied strong for second behind only the runaway 1-2 favorite while 18 lengths clear of second. Must respect.

FUNNY BUNNY: Went down as a big favorite after getting hooked in a suicidal seven-length-gap speed duel. Ready to make amends.

NORTHERN HONOUR: Got bumped and shuffled back at the start to begin further out of it than intended en route to a third-place finish. Knocking on the door.

ODE TO SMITTEN: Got caught in a four-length-gap speed duel and outlasted the early challenger for third in a race where the two deepest closers took advantage to run 1-2.

SPECTACTULAR ROAD: Held on well for second after getting hooked in a three-length-gap speed duel. Can shake loose up front.

SUMMIE BABY: Got hooked and cooked in a four-length-gap speed duel. Deserves another shot as a possible live overlay.

TALL GRASS CAT: Made an early move to try to tackle a runaway leader, but lost to that 4-5 favorite and a suck-up closer due to those efforts. Ready to improve in return from the sidelines.

W B AND ME: Broke slow, just as the eventual winner got out to an easy solo uncontested lead. Was best of the rest and is ready to break case of second-itis.

BEST BET - IKER: Lost as the favorite when unable to recover from getting pinched back and impeded at the start. Ran a solid third and just needs a good start.

LONGSHOT - FASHIONABLY LATE: Showed good interest both early and late in solid z-pattern third-place effort where she was shuffled back and impeded into the turn. Can rebound.

CHARLES TOWN

AARON'S TAP
GOING TO MARKET
JIMMY TOO
MARYLAND'S BEST

MOONLIT SONG
P T O'S BABE
TWICE THE GLORY
UNAQUOI

SAM HOUSTON

AHNIWAKE
ANOTHER BOND GIRL
COMIN' RIGHT UP
DARK DESERT WINE
GIRL LINK

GIVE ME EXCITATION
PICEANCE
SISTER ASHLEE
SOUTH TEXAS DRAWL
ZIG OR ZAG

TURF PARADISE

A MILLION TO ONE
ARTILLERO
CANTCHACO
CAUSTIC
CHELOKEE'S LEGACY
DETHRONE

DON'T HOLD ME BACK
MISS PURRFECT
MISS TUTI FRUTI
MY LAST PENNY
NOT THAT I RECALL
STORM HOLLOW

MAHONING VALLEY

ALIZA'S DREAM
CARSON'S TEN
DUKE OF WAYMORE
EM ROCZ
GOLDIE'S HUGGET
INJAAZAAT

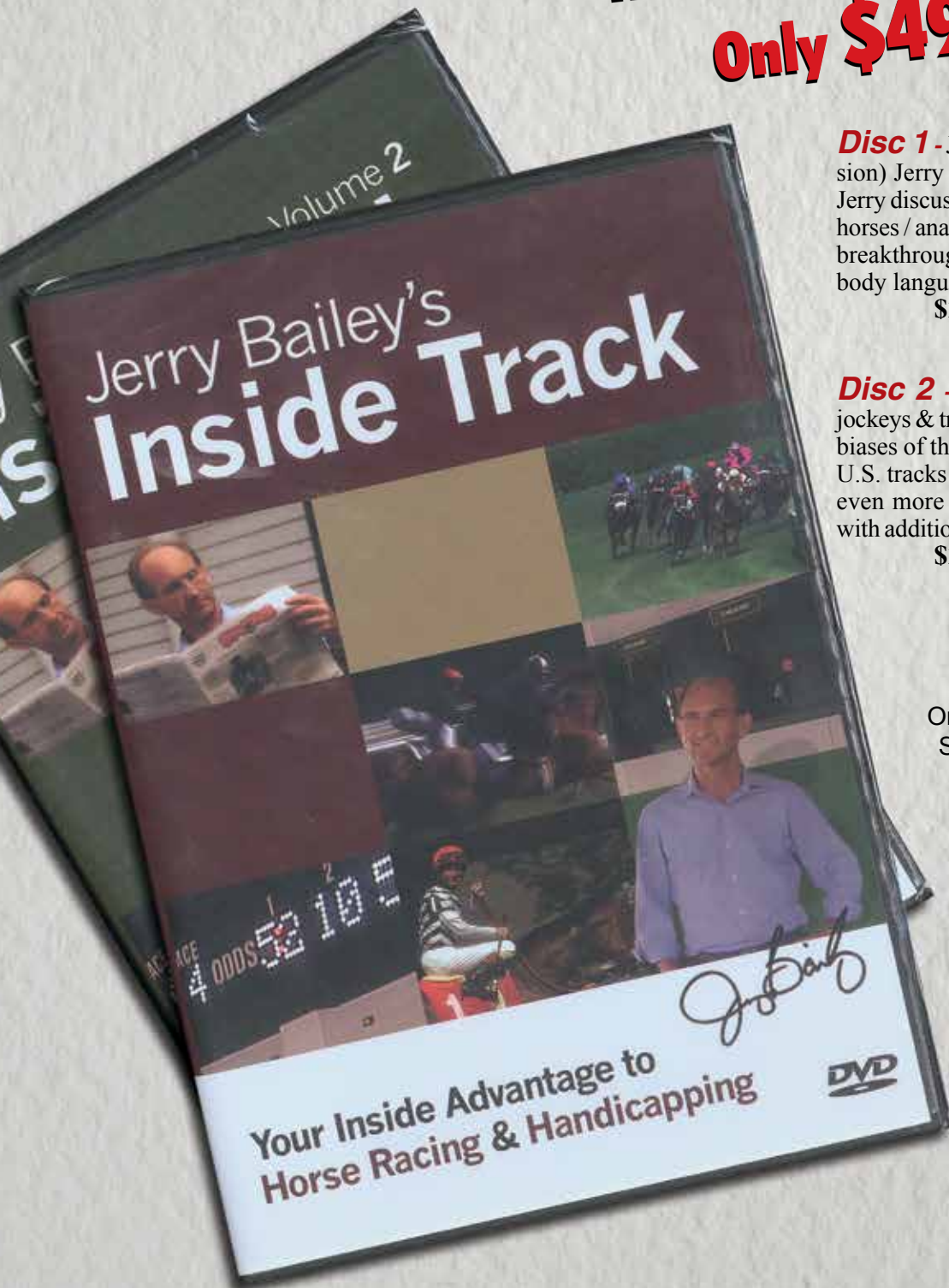
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P TOWN BOO
QUICKMACHADELCOCO
SIR LOWRY'S PASS
SMALL TOWN FLIRT
TAKE ME TO VIENNA

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SHED ROW

Winning reports from our trackmen at major ovals

OZONE PARK, NY

Ladies and gents:

UNION RIVER is a good one to use for underneath. RING KNOCKER comes out of there swinging. ORNATO has burned his last dollar; promise! Take a closer look at INVESTIGATOR. SABRINA BALLERINA dances right into the winner's circle. JUST GOT OUT always seems to show up. ZONIC continues to learn on the job for patient barn. POLAR JET can build off debut fourth for new connections off the claim. Finger Lakes invader ARCHER HILL proved he belongs with third at 19-1. STILL KRZ finishes first or second at a solid clip.

HALLANDALE BEACH, FL

Power to the patrons:

BLACKJACK BABY is holding a winning hand. CELTIC MOONLIGHT sneaks in under the radar. BOW TOWN CAT is speedy and dangerous; turf or dirt. DISCREET MANNER makes you forget about his record. Here's hoping that we all MAKE BIG MONEY! I WANT MO doesn't need to improve much to get the job done. NURSE JOHN takes care of the ATM faithful. LONESOME PALM will be all by herself at the wire. The ageless SINATRA does it his way. MIKES MUSCLE MAN strong arms the competition.

TAMPA BAY, FL

Greetings:

TRIBAL DRAMA makes up for lost time. TALE STONE is ready to roll. It's all or nothing with DESERT TUNE. UNION BLUES gets a pass for Pasco attempt. TO THE STARS will be flying late in the stretch. The warning signs are there for CONNECT THE DOTS. YAHTZEE QUEEN isn't here to play games. THE GREAT LOUDINI showed marked improvement in local debut. The results will speak for themselves with BREAK THE SILENCE. SUNSHINE LIFE brightens up your day.

BENSALEM, PA

Fellow horseplayers:

WANNA FOLLOW ME leads by example. STRONG DUDE's maiden win at 39-1 was no fluke. T CROSS has some sneaky form. The back class TWO WEEKS OFF is ready to go right now. PORTENT can upset right group if he gets clear. It's time for GAMBLER'S ROLL to get on a heater. EL GRILLO doesn't like to win, but can't be ignored for the gimmicks. EMPTY PRIZE fattens the wallet. STEVE SAYS NO has got it all figured out now. Old boy BIG TOWN is a fan favorite.

NEW ORLEANS, LA

Hello racing fans:

TREASURY BILL adds to the bank account. TOTALLY KIM never runs a bad one. Wouldn't be shocked if SWAMPED pulled off an upset. R FAIR CHER deserves another shot or two. I'M FORMIDABLE runs his best when able to clear early. TURN TO INCLUDE is long overdue. Here's a live one for you: FLYIN FOR A LIVIN. TUNE MY GUITAR is a finely tuned instrument. ADIOS NARDO says goodbye to his rivals at the top of the stretch. MIGHTY NICE RAGS can build off useful debut.

ARCADIA, CA

Attention ATM readers:

Looks like TRUE RANGER has found the right level now. BEAU RECALL (IRE) won like a good thing in her U.S. debut. ALL THAT HEAT gets a pass for stakes try. There's a buzz behind QUEEN BEE TO YOU. PRINCESS AUBREY has some sneaky form; don't ignore. WELL MEASURED stacks up well versus Cal-breds. MADIBA should be in your trifecta box. ICEBERG SLIM gets a piece at a price. OK DOLL is in very capable hands with Baltas. TEMPLAR runs them off their feet.

STOP WATCH SPECIALS

NEW YORK

MARRIAGE FEVER: Very popular claimer.
OASIS AT MIDNIGHT: Right here. Right now.
SING THE DREAM: Loves getting his picture taken.
THE GREAT SAMURAI: Slices and dices.

SO. FLORIDA

DEBRAH'S DANCE: Dig her moves.
ELIZABETH AURORA: Better than rated.
GLASS HOUSE (GB): Proves worth the wait.
SUNFEST: Brighter days ahead.

PHILADELPHIA

DANCEFORTHDEVIL: Never been closer.
HOUSE WINE: Can help you upgrade your glass.
PEAK A WOO: Worth a look.
SHES TUFF AS NAILS: Turns it around at \$5k.

MARYLAND

MISS NOSY: Gets her nose down on the line first.
MORE STORMYWEATHER: A win is in the forecast.
NO MORE TALK: Backs up our words.
PARADE OF NATIONS: Marches right into the winner's circle.

KENTUCKY

ALITTLECOMPLICATED: Actually, it's rather straightforward.
BELA MENINA: Clearly loves it at Turfway.
CITRUS MISS: The juice will be worth the squeeze.
NOT FOR PROFIT: Gets you out of the red.

LOUISIANA

A DIXIE TWISTER: The best is yet to come.
BOOM BAM BING: Drops the boom.
GRIT: Grinds one out.
OUT OF THE TRAPPE: Good fit at \$5k.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

ALY'S LAST MAGIC: Has some tricks up her sleeves.
EDDIE AND THE KING: Go ahead and crown him!
FORCE OF TEN: Uses the 'Force.'
WARREN'S JOE T.: Price play.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

AOTEAROA: Should offer nice value.
BIRD IS THE WORD: Plenty of upside on the lawn.
PUNDY: Owns some serious early gas.
SIR CAL: Rounds out a big one.

INDEX TO FIT & READY, SHED ROW AND STOP WATCH

This index can be used to locate horses listed in this month's Fit & Ready, Stop Watch and Shed Row pages. Track abbreviations are as follows:

AQUEDUCT:AQU	SANTA ANITA:SA
CHARLES TOWN:CT	SHED ROW:SR
DELTA DOWNS:DED	STOP WATCH:SW
FAIR GROUNDS:FG	SUNLAND PARK:Sun
GOLDEN GATE:GG	TAMPA BAY DOWNS:TAM
GULFSTREAM PARK:GP	TURF PARADISE:TUP
LAUREL PARK:LRL	TURF SELECTIONS:Trf
MAHONING VALLEY:MVR	TURFWAY PARK:TP
OAKLAWN PARK:OP	TURF SELECTIONS:Trf
PARX:PRX	SHED ROW:SR
PENN NATIONAL:PEN	STOP WATCH:SW
SAM HOUSTON:HOU	

A DIXIE TWISTER:SW	Bigger Picture :Trf	CONQUEST HIHOSILVER:OP	FOREST WARRIOR:TP
A MILLION TO ONE:TUP	BILL'S WEALTHYGIRL:TAM	CONTRASTING:TP	FOREVER PLUS :Trf
AARON'S TAP:CT	BIRD IS THE WORD:SW	COOKIE CRISP:AQU	FORGIVESSIS PWR:Sun
ACE DEUCE:GG	BLACK TAVISH:TP	CZARMO :Trf	FRAT STAR:AQU
ACKARET:AQU	BLACKJACK BABY :SR	Da Big Hoss :Trf	FULL SUN:Sun
AHNIWAKE:HOU	BOB'S MY UNCLE:LRL	DANCEFORTHEDEVIL:SW	GAMBLER'S ROLL :SR
ALAAPATIQUE:PRX	BONNIE ARCH :Trf	DANI'S RING:Sun	GATOR BOY:LRL
ALITTLECOMPLICATED:SW	BOOM BAM BING:SW	DARK DESERT WINE:HOU	Generosidade :Trf
ALIZA'S DREAM:MVR	BOW TIE AFFAIR :Trf	DAVID'S MEMORY:SA	GIRL LINK:HOU
ALL ABOUT DIVA:GP	BOW TOWN CAT :SR	Deauville :Trf	GIVE ME EXCITATION:HOU
ALL THAT HEAT :SR	BREAK THE SILENCE:SR	DEB'S WILDCARD:GG	GLASS HOUSE :SW
ALLIE'S EVENT:TAM	Bullards Alley :Trf	DEBRAH'S DANCE:SW	GOING TO MARKET:CT
ALY'S LAST MAGIC:SW	BULLFIGHT:Sun	DEFYING GRAVITY :Trf	GOLDIE'S HUGGET:MVR
AMERICAN TZAR:GP	CALAMITY JANE:FG	DELTA CHANCE:OP	Grand Tito :Trf
ANOTHER BOND GIRL:HOU	CAMY AWARD :Trf	DESERT TUNE:SR	GRANNY'S KITTEN :Trf
ANOTHER SOURCE:TP	CANTCHACO:TUP	DESIROUS:AQU	GRETSIE:TP
AOTEAROA:SW	CARSON'S TEN:MVR	DETHRONE:TUP	GRIT:SW
APPREHENDER:OP	CASTLETOWN:OP	DIAMOND DON:PEN	GROTON ST SCOUT:AQU
ARCHER HILL :SR	CAUSTIC:TUP	DISCREET MANNER:SR	HELLACIOUS HADLEE:GG
ARTILLERO:TUP	CEEME RUN WILD:SA	DISCREET SPY:FG	HIT TOP SPEED:DED
Ashleyluvssugar :Trf	CELTIC MOONLIGHT :SR	DOM CAT:Sun	HOUSE WINE:SW
Ashleyluvssugar :Trf	CHELOKEE'S LEGACY:TUP	DOMESTIC VINTAGE:SA	I WANT MO :SR
BALLINSKELLINGS:TAM	CIRCUS MUSIC:PEN	DON'T HOLD ME BACK:TUP	I'LL GIVE YOU WAR:TP
BEAU RECALL :SR	CITRUS MISS:SW	DUBLIN MY MONEY:AQU	ICEBERG SLIM :SR
BELA MENINA:SW	CIVIL DISPUTE:TP	DUKE OF WAYMORE:MVR	IMA HAPPY STRIKE:Sun
BETTER IN LEATHER:GG	CLOWNEY:PRX	EDDIE AND THE KING:SW	IN CONDITION:PRX
BIG DINNER:OP	COMIN' RIGHT UP:HOU	EL GRILLO :SR	INCLUDE GOLD:LRL
BIG TOWN :SR	CONNECT THE DOTS:SR	ELIZABETH AURORA:SW	INJAAZAAT:MVR
		ELLOREE GAL:GP	INVESTIGATOR:SR
		EM ROCZ:MVR	IZA DIABOLIC DUDE:Sun
		EMPTY PRIZE :SR	JACAPO:PRX
		ENTERPRISING :Trf	JAMIE'S DANCER:GP
		ENTWISTLE:GP	JIMMY TOO:CT
		ESCALANTE :Trf	JOHANN'S COMMAND:SA
		EVA LONDON:GP	JUST GOT OUT:SR
		EXCENTRA:GG	JUSTGIMMEAKISS:PEN
		EXIT SIXTY SLEW:GG	K C'S CALL:FG
		FAIR PROSPECT :Trf	K J R SOARING STAR:DED
		FAIR REGIS:AQU	Kaigun :Trf
		FAST FIRE:GP	Kasaqui :Trf
		FIRST DANCE:PEN	KENDRICKS:PRX
		FLYIN FOR A LIVIN:SR	KING OF ANYTHING:AQU
		FORCE OF TEN:SW	KISMET'S HEELS:GP

INDEX TO FIT & READY, SHED ROW AND STOP WATCH

- KY. COLONEL:SA
 LAST LIGHTNING:GP
 LAWYERSGUNS N'MONEY:GG
 LEMON ROYAL :Trf
 LENNY:AQU
 LETMEBETHE ONE:LRL
 LIEM W:MVR
 LIL BIT OF THUNDER:Sun
 LIMEHOUSGAS:TAM
 LIP SERVICE:FG
 LIPAN:OP
 LITTLEMISSPERFECT :Trf
 LONESOME PALM :SR
 LOST IN LEXINGTON:GG
 MAD PATRIOT:GP
 MADIBA :SR
 MAIN TRACK ONLY:PEN
 MAKE BIG MONEY:SR
 MARGARET'S SONG:DED
 MARITIME PULPIT:GP
 MARRIAGE FEVER:SW
 MARYLAND'S BEST:CT
 MAXAINTASAIN:TP
 MECKE'S MADALYN:LRL
 MESOMA:OP
 MIDNIGHT TALE:GP
 MIGHTY NICE RAGS :SR
 MIKES MUSCLE MAN :SR
 MISS NOSY:SW
 MISS PURRFECT:TUP
 MISS TUTI FRUTI:TUP
 MIZZENMYHONEYMOON:TAM
 MOBILEDIXIE :Trf
 MOONLIT SONG:CT
 MORE STORMYWEATHER:SW
 MR ICE PICK:Sun
 MY LAST PENNY:TUP
 MY PROPHET:FG
 MYSTIC JOY:TP
 MYSTICAL IMAGE:SA
 NATHAN'S TIZZY:FG
 NEVER STOP LOOKING:LRL
 NICHE :Trf
 NO MORE TALK:SW
 NOT FOR PROFIT:SW
 NOT THAT I RECALL:TUP
 NURSE JOHN:SR
 OASIS AT MIDNIGHT:SW
 OH MARVELOUS ME:SA
 OK DOLL :SR
 ONECATS CHANCE:AQU
 ORNATO :SR
 OUT OF THE TRAPPE:SW
 P T O'S BABE:CT
 P TOWN BOO:MVR
 PARADE OF NATIONS:SW
 PARLAY PONTI :Trf
 PATH OF EXILE:SA
 PAX IN TERRA:AQU
 PAYDEN CASH:DED
 PAYTON'S VICTORY:PEN
 PEAK A WOO:SW
 PERFECT GAME CAIN:LRL
 PICEANCE:HOU
 PLANE LUCKY:SA
 PLAYING A JOKE:OP
 POLAR JET :SR
 PORTENT :SR
 PRETTY CITY DANCER:GP
 PRIDE OF NAVARONE:Sun
 PRINCESS AUBREY :SR
 PRINCESS VICTO:GP
 PROUD MISSION:TP
 PUNDY:SW
 PURIM'S GOLD:PRX
 QUEEN BEE TO YOU:SR
 QUICK SAND:OP
 QUICKMACHADELCOCO:MVR
 QUINCY GIRL:AQU
 R FAIR CHER :SR
 RED PARASOL :Trf
 RESILIENT ONE:AQU
 RICH MOMMY:GP
 RING KNOCKER :SR
 RISETOTHEOCCASION:AQU
 ROLLIN WITH OLIN:TAM
 RYE PATCH:SA
 SABRINA BALLERINA :SR
 SCHWEETS :Trf
 SHARP CLARK:FG
 SHEER FLATTERY:SA
 SHES TUFF AS NAILS:SW
 SHEZA FIRSTSAMURAI:SA
 Si Sage :Trf
 SINATRA :SR
 SING THE DREAM:SW
 SIR CAL:SW
 SIR LOWRY'S PASS:MVR
 SISTER ASHLEE:HOU
 SISTER PATRICIA:PRX
 SIVA:TP
 SMACK RIDGE:Sun
 SMALL TOWN FLIRT:MVR
 SMOKIN NOW:OP
 SONGFORTHEOFFICER:DED
 SOUTH TEXAS DRAWL:HOU
 SPECIAL RISK:AQU
 SPECTACULAR FLASH:AQU
 STEVE SAYS NO :SR
 STIHL HARBOR:DED
 STILL KRZ :SR
 STORM HOLLOW:TUP
 STORMY PRINCESS:AQU
 STRONG DUDE:SR
 SUNFEST:SW
 SUNSHINE LIFE :SR
 SUPERMANS CAPE:TAM
 SWAMP RULER:OP
 SWAMPED :SR
 SYMPOSIUM:SA
 SYNTAX:SA
 T CROSS :SR
 TAKE ME TO VIENNA:MVR
 TALE STONE :SR
 TALK LESS:GP
 TAPNOW:DED
 TATUMTOWN:DED
 TEMPLAR :SR
 Texas Ryano :Trf
 THE DANDY MAN CAN:GG
 THE GREAT LOUDINI :SR
 THE GREAT SAMURAI:SW
 The Pizza Man :Trf
 THECLASSPRAYER:DED
 TILLA CAT:Sun
 TIZK TIZK:TAM
 TIZTHESOUND:GP
 TO THE STARS :SR
 TOBIT:DED
 TOTAL JOINT:GP
 TOUGH EMBLEM:GG
 TREASURY BILL :SR
 TRIBAL DRAMA :SR
 TROPICAT:GP
 TRUE RANGER :SR
 TUNE MY GUITAR:SR
 TURN TO INCLUDE:SR
 TWICE THE GLORY:CT
 TWO STEP TIME :Trf
 TWO WEEKS OFF :SR
 UNAQUOI:CT
 UNION BLUES :SR
 UNION RIVER :SR
 VAN PERSIE:PEN
 VENTINA:GP
 VINCENTO:AQU
 VOW ME OVER :Trf
 Wake Forest :Trf
 WANNA FOLLOW ME :SR
 WARREN'S JOE T:SW
 WEAVERS ICE GOLD:TP
 WELL MEASURED :SR
 WESTERN RESERVE:Trf
 World Approval :Trf
 YAHTZEE QUEEN :SR
 YOU VOW ME:OP
 ZIG OR ZAG:HOU
 ZINVOR:SA
 ZIP VAN WINKLE:OP
 ZOEY D:TAM
 ZONIC :SR



Vic Stauffer Brings Unique Personality to Oaklawn Booth

By David Zenner

WHETHER IT'S CALLING RACES, playing in handicapping tournaments, or running a professional baseball team, Vic Stauffer brings passion to the table. Stauffer, who by his own count has called at least one race at 32 different racetracks, was named the new voice of Oaklawn Park this season when last year's caller Pete Aiello got the gig as full-time Gulfstream Park racecaller.

Other than a brief stint at this year's Fresno NoCal fair meet, Stauffer returns to the booth after not announcing races at a major track for more than three years (1,118 days to be exact), after calling the final race at Hollywood Park in December 2013. That is a long gap for someone who has been announcing almost non-stop for some 30 years.

Among the tracks Stauffer has been employed as announcer include, in somewhat chronological order – Detroit Race Course, Ak-Sar-Ben, Blue Ribbon Downs, the Northern California Fairs, Hialeah, Hawthorne, Golden Gate Fields, Gulfstream Park, and Hollywood Park.

With Oaklawn's biggest races such as the Rebel, the Apple Blossom, the Oaklawn Handicap, and Arkansas Derby still to come, Stauffer is settling nicely

into the groove. As his predecessors before him have discovered, the job as voice of Oaklawn Park is revered throughout Arkansas, and Hot Springs is truly a horse racing town.

"They call it the fifth season. You have winter, spring and fall, and then you have 'Oaklawn'," Stauffer said. "In this town, it truly is about people coming to the races for the on-track experience. At Hollywood Park I could have walked around with a sandwich board that said I was the announcer and nobody would care, but here I can't walk from my office to the elevator to go upstairs without being stopped without have a half-dozen people come up to me giving 'Atta Boys' and saying how happy they are than I am here, and how excited they are about that day's racing.

"I did a speech at the local Hot Springs Rotary Club and I found out afterward that they don't do speeches." He continued, "At that particular Rotary Club they really only look forward to two speeches a year – one is the announcer of Oaklawn Park, and the other is the governor of Arkansas."

The 57-year-old Stauffer has done just about everything in racing including stints as a jockey's agent for Joel Rosario, Martin Garcia and Tyler Baze,

and as a steward. "Other than the time I was an agent, I was available as a steward beginning in 2007. When Tyler got hurt in 2010, it gave me the opportunity to step away from being an agent and become a steward again as need. When Hollywood closed at the end of 2013 I became a steward full-time until April 2015."

At that time Stauffer made a bold decision to turn-in his steward's license and go "all-in" on handicapping tournaments.

"I said to my wife that I had done just about everything there is to do in this business but I've never really tried to see if I could be successful betting on races," he said. "In this day and age contests and tournaments have become a very big deal and I became very interested in that. I've been 100 times more successful than I thought I would be."

Stauffer has won a couple of large tournaments in Southern California – the Santa Anita Preakness Challenge in May 2016 which made him eligible for a \$1 million bonus had he won the Breeders' Cup Betting Challenge (BCBC) later that year, and then the Del Mar November Handicapping Challenge, which makes him eligible for a \$1 million bonus should he win the 2017 BCBC.

When the Oaklawn meet ends, Stauffer said he will go back to tournament play but was quick to add, "in the spring and summer I will be much more selective [in the tournaments] because of [my involvement with] the Pittsburg Diamonds."

The Diamonds are an independent professional baseball team that plays in the Pacific Association in the San Francisco East Bay region that plays its games in June, July and August. After doing PA announcements and calling the team's games over the Internet, Stauffer was given a more prominent role for the upcoming season.

"Last year I sent all four teams in the league and e-mail explaining that I had PA experience and if they needed any help that I would be happy to help out," he said. "The guy that owns the Diamonds got back to me and said they needed a PA announcer and a play-by-play announcer and the job would pay

\$50 a game. I met him the day before opening day and talked about what we were going to do and he said to, 'There's one thing, I can't pay you the \$50 a game.' So I said the only thing I could which was, 'What time is first pitch?'

"I worked the whole season not only doing PA and play-by-play, but being 'chief cook and bottle washer' and every other thing. At the end of the season the owner said he thought of the perfect way to show his appreciation for everything I did, and he made me president of the team and gave me a minority ownership.

"This year I'm going into my first year as actual president of the team which means I might have to do just about anything," he said, adding, "That could mean I might still do PA or play-by-play or I might have to pick up the players and drive them to the games or wash the uniforms. I could negotiate players' contracts – our entire salary

cap is \$31,000 for the season, so a lot of players are playing for nothing because they want to play professional baseball. Our entire coaching staff is unpaid. But it is so... much... fun.

"Last year we were able to use the marketing budget and with the other teams' permission we signed (former major league player) Jose Canseco to play the entire month of August," he said. "It was a pretty good decision because we were averaging about 150 fans a game, and that tripled for home games in August whether [Canseco] played or just signed autographs."

There aren't many people in this game more colorful than Stauffer, and if he has his way he'll be calling races, playing in tournaments, and having fun running a professional baseball team for many years to come.



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Finest City

"I'm soaking it in, because I don't know if it's going to take 28 more years to get another one. I know it doesn't come easy. I know there are horsemen who have been training their whole career to get an opportunity like this," Ian Kruljac after Finest City's win in the Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint.

By Ellen Parker

AT THE END OF THE DAY, THOROUGHbred racing is really all about history and tradition – one of the reasons it is such an appealing sport. Finest City, for example, is from an old Wheatley Stable/Phipps background, calling to mind great horses like Bold Ruler and Easy Goer. Her family, likewise, is filled with familiar names: her sixth dam, Lady Be Good has been a source of grand horses for several decades, the best of which include Wavering Monarch, Zilzal, Goodbye Halo and Culture Vulture. She is the modern foundation mare of the line.

Discipline, her fourth dam, set the stage for Finest City's versatility. She

won the Test Stakes at 7F, and placed in the Alabama, run at a classic distance. As the family progressed, it encountered some fertility problems, but her unraced third dam Fiddlesticks, was by Northern Dancer and was a half-sister to the top-class Squander. Her second dam, While Rome Burns, was a tough (53 starts) winner and finally her dam, Be Envied, was a stakes-placed mare by classic winner Lemon Drop Kid who completed the picture.

Finest City's sire, City Zip, while never a household name, has been aged like a bottle of Bordeaux. A Hopeful winner himself, he is a half-brother to

Ghostzapper and has sired in addition to Finest City, Breeders' Cup winners Catch A Glimpse (Juvenile Fillies Turf), Dayatthespa (Filly and Mare Turf), and Work All Week (Breeders' Cup Sprint). The overall picture is one of versatility both as to distance and surface, and Finest City fits right in at the top.

And who better to nurture these wonderful, historic bloodlines than a fourth-generation horseman? Ian Kruljac's father, Eric, thought that it was time for Ian – just 28-years-old – to train on his own. Further, the elder Kruljac wanted his son's first horse to be an individual with potential, not just an average claimer, so he chose an

\$85,000 Keeneland yearling purchase owned by long-time clients Wayne and Tyler Seltzer. Hall of Fame rider Mike Smith eventually completed the team.

A fan of both *Finest City*'s sire and broodmare sire, *City Zip*, and *Lemon Drop Kid*, respectively, Tyler Seltzer was immediately drawn to the eventual champion. He had the utmost confidence in his young trainer, and when his filly injured her leg prior to her first start, the early detection by veterinarian Dr. Barrie Grant of the tibia injury no doubt saved the filly's career.

Kruljac, whose first jobs had included walking hot for *Zenyatta*'s trainer John Shireffs, commented on her early months at the track. "We had to separate her from another good filly in the barn, *Blingismything*, because the two would compete to see who could kick the barn harder. Even at two, she had that swagger. She was always full of run, hard to hold down mentally. She wanted to be the queen of the barn."

Finest City's injury was bad enough to end any idea of racing her at age

two. But she was able to face the starter six times at three. She lost her first six-furlong start to *Gloryzapper* by a length at Del Mar, then won her second race by 8 ½ lengths over the same distance and at that same venue a little over a month later. Her third start produced a fourth in a minor stake at Santa Anita over the downhill turf course at 6 ½ furlongs. She finished out the year with an allowance win and placing at Del Mar and Los Alamitos, and then ran sixth in the G1 *La Brea Stakes* at Santa Anita the day after Christmas, 2015.

In 2016, the chestnut filly made eight starts and hit the board six times. To her credit, she ran against the best and at the highest level most of the year. *Finest City* began her three-year-old campaign with a second to California champion *Lost Bus* in the G2 *Santa Monica Stakes* at seven furlongs, beaten just a head. She tailed off a bit in her next start, an allowance, running third beaten 4 ¾ lengths.

The G3 *Las Flores* at six furlongs

was her third start of the year and she responded with a fourth, beaten eight lengths behind winning *Fantastic Style*. On April 23, *Finest City* finally put it all together in the 6 ½ furlong G2 *Great Lady M. Stakes* at Los Alamitos. She won by 1 ¼ lengths under Kent Desormeaux, who was riding her for the first time.

Coming from a bit farther back than her usual stalking trip, *Finest City* ran down leading *Fantastic Style* to win in a determined drive. Said Kruljac, "We knew we had a really nice filly and we've just had to give her time. It paid off today. All I told Kent today was 'good luck'. You don't really tell a Hall of Famer how to do their job."

The young trainer then sent his talented miss on a quest against the best in three very trying events – the G1 *Vanity Mile* in which she ran third, beaten 2 ½ lengths by the outstanding pair of *Beholder* and *Stellar Wind*, the G2 1 1/16-mile *Yellow Ribbon*, in which she ran fourth, beaten only 1 ¾ lengths, and the G2 1 1/8-mile *John C.*



Finest City

Mabee Stakes in which she was beaten just a head by Avenge. Finest City had proven she could route, but no one was quite sure whether it was her best game.

Next up, Finest City took-on 12 other fillies in the Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint. In a game and focused effort, she ran down the 2015 winner of that same race, Wavell Avenue, to win by $\frac{3}{4}$ of a length under Mike Smith. Said Kruljac, "She sends herself out there and Mike chose not to take her back, which was perfect. She's got a high cruising speed." Added Smith, "The old handicapping angle of 'turf to dirt' and a long turf race to a middle distance (7 furlong) sprint is a really good way to get a horse ready for a race like this. They learn to relax a little better and it's easier on them."

Having finally realized her potential, Finest City was rewarded with an Eclipse Award as the champion female sprinter of 2016. Her versatility had served her well. And her trainer's first – and for the moment only – training

job had validated his father's faith in his ability to stand on his own.

As to her future, her young trainer observed of Finest City's Breeders' Cup victory, "She dug down and started to pull away more, so I know she's got a lot of heart and is definitely a fighter."

There could not possibly be a better way to validate an Eclipse Award than coming right back with a big win. This Finest City did on January 21 at Santa Anita, with a $\frac{3}{4}$ -length victory over old rival Fantastic Style in the G2 seven-furlong Santa Monica Stakes.

In a change of style, Finest City broke sharply and led nearly every step of the way, winning in 1:21 $\frac{2}{5}$ over a wet, sealed track. Mike Smith was once again aboard, making the pair's combined efforts 2-for-2 and bumping Finest City's bankroll over the \$1 million mark.

"We're just keeping her fresh," Kruljac informed, "We're not laying her off at all. That's the way she runs best. The inside (post) was a big obstacle today and Mike just took it to them.

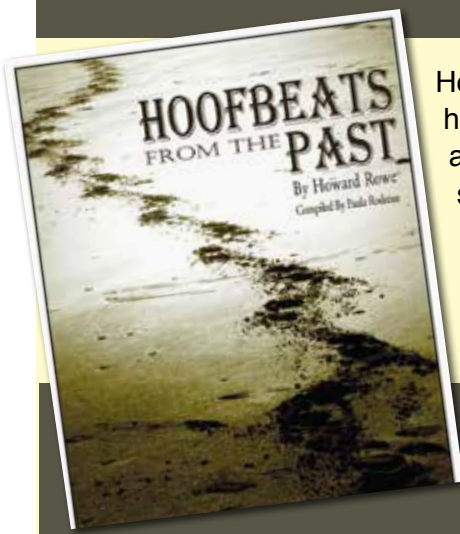
She's got stamina. She's got everything you'd ever want in the breeding of a race horse."

She does, indeed, have the breeding to be all she has become. The bloodline is there in the trainer as well. Ian Kruljac's father, Eric, commented that wherever this filly takes his son, "it's in his blood."

Where Ian plans to take her in the immediate future is around two turns. He noted that there are not enough important sprints in California to keep her busy. And, as we have seen, from the Phipps roots to the advent of a good sire like City Zip who has matured into a top sire, the blood runs hot in the veins of Finest City. Hot enough to double her bankroll this season and to win another Eclipse as well – perhaps in a different category given her resourcefulness.



HOOFBEATS FROM THE PAST



Howard Rowe has not only written about thoroughbred racing history, he has lived it. He has devoted most of his life to the sport as a writer and observer. A first-hand knowledge of the sport, a sharp intellect and longevity combined to make him a valuable historian. This collection of his work brings horses, colorful characters, races and racetracks of the late 19th and early 20th century to life and recalls a bygone era. His historical articles are part of thoroughbred racing's legacy.

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The Western Road to Louisville

By Steve Sherack

WITH WEST COAST-BASED 3-YEAR-olds landing four out of the last five renewals of the Kentucky Derby, Steve Sherack takes a closer look at some of the leading sophomores in training in the Golden State that should be on your radar as the First Saturday in May approaches.

Leading the Pack...

MASTERY (by Candy Ride [Arg] – Steady Course, by Old Trieste); Tr.-Bob Baffert

Unbeaten in his first three career starts – capped by a blowout win while making his two-turn debut in the G1 Los Alamitos Cash Call Futurity Dec. 10 – Mastery heads a loaded hand for four-time Kentucky Derby-winning trainer Bob Baffert. The Cheyenne Stable color-bearer was hammered down to .30 cents on the dollar and ran to the hype with a jaw-dropping, front-running debut score at Santa Anita on Oct. 22. He followed suit with a better-than-it-looked 1 1/4-length win under extremely confident handling in Del Mar's seven-furlong G3 Bob Hope

on Nov. 19. The \$425,000 Keeneland September yearling purchase, hailing from the same family as Jump Start, exchanged blows through a sharp half mile in :45.65 and impressively took off down the lane when asked the question by Hall of Famer Mike Smith to conclude his juvenile campaign with a 7 1/4-length romp in the Los Al Futurity, good for a 91 Beyer Speed Figure. Mastery, produced by the two-time winning Overbrook Farm homebred Steady Course, is expected to return to action in March.

AMERICAN ANTHEM (by Bodemeister--Indy's Windy, by A.P. Indy); Tr.-Bob Baffert

Baffert has another serious Derby contender on his hands with American Anthem. From the first crop of the 2012 Derby and Preakness runner-up Bodemeister, American Anthem surged late to just get up by a neck as the 9-5 favorite in his debut sprinting at Del Mar on Dec. 3. The \$435,000 OBS March juvenile, owned in partnership by a group including WinStar Farm, fell a head short to Grade 1 winner Gormley after putting on a fierce stretch duel in

a race that didn't deserve a loser when stretched to a mile in the G3 Sham Stakes on Jan. 7. Produced by an A.P. Indy winning half-sister to 1998 champion 3-year-old filly Banshee Breeze, American Anthem should continue to appreciate more real estate this spring.

GORMLEY (by Malibu Moon--Race to Urga, by Bernstein); Tr.-John Shirreffs

Gormley tipped his hand that he may be a good one with a stylish debut win for the very patient John Shirreffs barn going 6 1/2 furlongs at Del Mar last September. The handsome bay rewarded his followers with a wire-to-wire upset victory at 10-1 while taking on two turns for the first time in the G1 FrontRunner Stakes at Santa Anita a month later, but never showed up in the G1 Breeders' Cup Juvenile after a slight bobble at the start and a five-wide journey around the first turn. Gormley, by the same sire as 2013 Derby hero Orb, rebounded quite nicely from that well-beaten seventh-place finish with a game-as-can-be victory over American Anthem in a G3 Sham for the ages contested over a sloppy going. Owned

by Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Moss, 'Team Zenyatta' also brought home the roses with 2005 Kentucky Derby upsetter Giacomo. Gormley's regular rider Victor Espinoza has been aboard two of the last three Derby winners, courtesy of California Chrome and American Pharoah.

ROYAL MO (by Uncle Mo--Royal Irish Lass, by Saint Ballado); Tr.-John Shirreffs

The rapidly improving Royal Mo has joined stablemate Gormley on the Triple Crown trail after wiring a five-horse field in the G3 Robert B. Lewis in early February, earning a career-high 93 Beyer Speed Figure in the process. A game debut second after dueling throughout, he flashed some serious potential when making up a ton of ground after hesitating at the start to place a well-beaten second behind

the promising Beach Bum at Santa Anita in early November. Royal Mo concluded his sophomore campaign with a wire-to-wire maiden win at third asking when stretched to a mile at Del Mar three weeks later. The \$300,000 KEESSEP yearling was produced by a winless daughter of the grassy New York-bred millionaire Irish Linnet. Owner Jerry Moss revealed in the Robert Lewis winner's circle that Gormley and Royal Mo would run in different preps next month, keeping one in California and sending the other to Arkansas, respectively.

Up and Comers...

BATTLE OF MIDWAY (by Smart Strike-Rigoletta, by Concerto); Tr.-Jerry Hollendorfer

Battle of Midway announced his

presence with authority via a visually impressive debut score going six furlongs at the Great Race Place on Jan. 21. Off at odds of 3-1 over a track labeled wet fast, the January foal forced the issue from the outside through an opening quarter in :21 3/5. He took over as they straightened for home and strode out nicely in the stretch to win going away by 3 1/4 promising lengths. Battle of Midway was assigned a Beyer Speed Figure of 88 for the win. Rick Porter's Fox Hill Farms went to \$410,000 to acquire the son of 2010 G1 Oak Leaf victress Rigoletta at the 2015 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga Yearling Sale. It may be worth keeping an eye on the runner-up that day, too. Trained by Peter Miller, PALMER'S WAY (by Gemologist--Bailzee, by Grand Slam) turned in a nice debut effort to finish a clear-cut second after missing



Gormley Edges American Anthem in the Sham Stakes



Mastery

the break. The seven-furlong G2 San Vicente could be next for Battle of Midway.

BEACH BUM (by Arch--Chili Cat, by Storm Cat); Tr.-Bob Baffert

Despite a spotty worktab since airing in his seven-furlong unveiling at Santa Anita in early November, Beach Bum is definitely one you need to keep on your radar. Let go at a somewhat surprising 5-1 considering his high-profile connections, the \$400,000 Keeneland September graduate pressed a hot pace from the outside while three deep, took over at the top of the lane and ran up the score in the stretch to graduate by 5 1/4 lengths over the aforementioned Royal Mo. Distance doesn't figure to be a problem for this guy going forward, either. His second dam Matlacha Pass (by Seeking the Gold) produced Pine Island and Point of Entry, a pair of Grade 1-winning Phipps homebreds at 10 furlongs. A must-have for your stable mail account.

ILIAD (by Ghostzapper--Little Swoon, by You And I); Tr.-Doug O'Neill

Trainer Doug O'Neill is now calling the shots on this impressive Los Alamitos maiden breaker after owner Kaleem Shah and trainer Bob Baffert's well-documented recent split. He pressed a hot pace and faded to finish a well-beaten ninth behind former stablemate American Anthem in his Dec. 3 Del Mar debut, but looked like a new horse returning just 15 days later, stalking and pouncing en route to a 3 1/2-length tally going six furlongs, good for a 92 Beyer Speed Figure. Iliad's half-brother Melmich (by Wilko) could run all day, boasting graded wins in Canada's long-distance Dominion Day Stakes and Valedictory Stakes. O'Neill can certainly get them ready to fire on the First Saturday of May, too, securing his second Derby win with Nyquist last year.

CONQUEST SMARTEE (by Smart Strike--Forty Gran, by El Gran Senor); Tr.-John Sadler

Held in high regard by his former trainer Mark Casse, Conquest Smartee made only one trip to the post as a juvenile, reporting home a well-beaten second behind the speedy subsequent stakes winner Uncle B over Woodbine's all-weather track after enduring a very troubled trip as the 8-5 chalk in early October. Entered in the Keeneland November Sale as part of the complete dispersal of Conquest Stables, the full-brother to Grade 1 winner and 2008 Breeders' Cup Juvenile runner-up Square Eddie brought \$390,000 from bloodstock agent David Ingordo and has been working well for trainer John Sadler at Santa Anita since. Don't expect this guy to remain in the maiden ranks for long.

Under the Radar...



Grassy Maiden Claimers

Profitable Visits to Turf Racing's "Bargain Basement"

By William F. Hudgins, Jr.

WHILE HARDLY A VIABLE MAJOR option amongst most serious students of the turf, maiden claiming races over the sod can – at times – offer interesting potential selections as situational spot plays. This is especially true as the distances get longer and those entered, while obviously less than “outstanding” in terms of talent/quality, can be addressed with a common sense approach to good form and potential improvement. It doesn't take much to isolate this type of turf router, either, as even the smallest hint of recent ability is enough to elevate these modest athletes toward their first career win.

Lightly-raced improving young Thoroughbreds who have as yet not demonstrated they are total flops deserve the most attention in maiden claiming grass races at a mile or longer. First time starters and horses with more than 10 lifetime starts are automatic eliminations. So too are runners who show that they have failed to win in four or more times against maiden claiming grass routers – regardless the circumstances of those losses (wide runs, bad racing luck, close finishes, etc.). What we ideally

like to see is a sustained early or middle run – an effort covering either the first three calls or the second three calls – where the runner concluded that run no more than five lengths off the leader. Such efforts are further enhanced by the horse finishing the race within five lengths of the eventual winner. This type performance spotlights an improving horse – one that may well have something positive to offer next outing, if indeed placed against middling competition going long over the grass.

To further clarify the mainstay considerations, let's take an in-depth look at Big Lick Farm's Turkomani, winner of a \$16,000 maiden claiming route going 1 1/16th miles over the turf course at Tampa Bay Downs. The 3-year-old son of Colonel John entered that modest grass heat with just five career starts under his belt and had only lost twice beforehand going long versus similar maiden claimers over the sod. With his most recent race being a 6-1/2 furlong run over the main track (no doubt a conditioner for today's “main event”) we shift our attention one race back to find the desired turf route. In that key heat we see that he qualifies with

a nice three-call sustained run beginning with the first call and concluding with the stretch call. The end of that run found him 4-1/2 lengths behind the leader. The recently claimed Reid Nagle charge checked home fifth beaten just 2-1/2 lengths – all parameters well within our guidelines. This time Turkomani did not waver at the end of another sustained long run, finishing off the job to win by daylight and returning a nice \$12.20 mutuel.

While undoubtedly not what one would typically deem “prime investment opportunities”, these grass selling races for maidens – if assaulted from a shrewdly-applied basis of pure common sense – can indeed present value to those willing to dive into turf racing's “bargain basement” when presented with potentially sound possibilities. Intelligently employed, these heats can be comfortably supplemented to the arsenal of spot play choices that every thriving handicapper must bring to the table over the course of the long seasonal racing campaign. Good handicapping my friends!



Mainstay Considerations For Maiden Claiming Turf Races

1. Confine selections to maiden claiming races carded at one mile or longer over the grass.
2. Immediately eliminate from further consideration any first time starters and any entrant with more than 10 career races.
3. Eliminate all horses who show more than three losses to maiden claiming turf routers (eight-furlongs or longer) in their past performances.
4. To remain a potential selection, the runner under scrutiny must show – in its most recent grass route and with that effort having occurred in one of its two most recent races – that it put in a sustained run across three consecutive calls not including the finish with that run concluding with the entrant no more than five lengths behind the leader.
5. Finally, dismiss all remaining contenders who were beaten more than five lengths at the finish of the aforementioned key race.

Bronze Bull

\$11.80

Ow: Smith Farms and Stable
Raspberry, White Collar, White Cuffs

Ch. g (WALF) 3 (Apr)
Sire: Bushy (Timone) \$1,000
Dam: Alyssa (Makalala)
Br: Smith Farms & Stable (N4)
Tr: Lynch Cathal

Table with columns: Life, 1, 2, 2, \$2,740, 73, D.Fat, 6 0 1 1, \$2,100, 67. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Table with columns: Date, Race, Class, Distance, Time, Position, Jockey, Trainer. Rows include 12Apr16-3url, 16Apr16-8pm, 14Apr16-7Mth, etc.

Table with columns: Life, 1, 2, 2, \$2,740, 73, D.Fat, 6 0 1 1, \$2,100, 67. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Just Be Steppin

\$17.20

Ow: Merrill B Schoror, David J Lynch, Ken Black, Pink Sash, Black Cap

B. L. 3 (Feb) KEEJAN IS DRUM
Sire: English Channel (Secret Strike) \$25,000
Dam: War Indian (Dylan Charlie)
Br: Curtis Brown & William Sawyers (Ky)
Tr: Schoror Merrill B

Table with columns: Life, 1, 1, 1, \$16,435, 62, D.Fat, 1 0 0 0, \$95, 15. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Table with columns: Date, Race, Class, Distance, Time, Position, Jockey, Trainer. Rows include 3Mar16-3FC, 17Feb16-8FC, 23Jan16-8FC, etc.

Table with columns: Life, 1, 1, 1, \$16,435, 62, D.Fat, 1 0 0 0, \$95, 15. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Daniel Le Deux

\$17.60

Ow: Richard P Blue Sr
Brown, Yellow Sash, Yellow Sleeves

B. g (WALF) 4 (Apr)
Sire: Lynch Gallener (Centerage Dancer) \$2,000
Dam: Pricasso Pary (Paul Simon)
Br: Richard Blue (MD)
Tr: Maryann Ann W

Table with columns: Life, 1, 1, 1, \$43,943, 88, D.Fat, 0 0 0 0, \$0, -. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Table with columns: Date, Race, Class, Distance, Time, Position, Jockey, Trainer. Rows include 1July16-6d, 16Apr16-8pm, 20Apr16-3pm, etc.

Table with columns: Life, 1, 1, 1, \$43,943, 88, D.Fat, 0 0 0 0, \$0, -. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Y'er Wan

\$39.80

Ow: Carl Doran & Paulette French
Black, Sky Blue Diamond, Black Cap

B. L. 3 (Apr) EASSEPH \$1,000
Sire: Fairbents (Blad's Cassway) \$2,000
Dam: Kazzelle (Broken View)
Br: Two Legends Farm (Md)
Tr: Susan Carl

Table with columns: Life, 1, 1, 2, 0, \$27,688, 63, D.Fat, 2 0 1 0, \$3,000, 43. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Table with columns: Date, Race, Class, Distance, Time, Position, Jockey, Trainer. Rows include 17Sep16-1L, 13Aug16-3L, 16July16-5L, etc.

Table with columns: Life, 1, 1, 2, 0, \$27,688, 63, D.Fat, 2 0 1 0, \$3,000, 43. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Zippy Gal

\$17.20

Ow: Vince Campanella
Red & White Diamonds, Red Collar

B. h. w. r. 6. 3 (Mar)
Sire: City Zip (Carson City) \$40,000
Dam: Win Clavon \$68 (Marja'ns)
Br: Timothy Reamy (Pa)
Tr: Leatherbury King T

Table with columns: Life, 1, 0, 0, \$15,900, 61, D.Fat, 0 0 0 0, \$0, -. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Table with columns: Date, Race, Class, Distance, Time, Position, Jockey, Trainer. Rows include 30May16-7pm, 23Mar16-8FC, 20Feb16-12FC, etc.

Table with columns: Life, 1, 0, 0, \$15,900, 61, D.Fat, 0 0 0 0, \$0, -. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Turkomani

\$12.20

Ow: Big Lick Farm
Yellow, Lime And Orange Cheerons, Orange

B. h. w. r. 6 (LH) 3 (Apr) KEESEPH \$1,000
Sire: Colonel John (Timone) \$1,000
Dam: Gold Dust (Parent Wilcox)
Br: Doug Brantson & Felicia Brantson (Ky)
Tr: Nigel Reid

Table with columns: Life, 1, 0, 0, \$9,168, 53, D.Fat, 1 0 0 0, \$700, 35. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Table with columns: Date, Race, Class, Distance, Time, Position, Jockey, Trainer. Rows include 26Apr16-4Tam, 23Mar16-10Tam, 13Mar16-10Tam, etc.

Table with columns: Life, 1, 0, 0, \$9,168, 53, D.Fat, 1 0 0 0, \$700, 35. Rows show performance data for 2016 and 2015.

Takeouts and their Effects

By Barry Meadow

EVERY BET HAS A COST, THE TAKEOUT. It generally hovers between 15 and 25 percent, depending on the jurisdiction and the type of wager. As a rule, betting to win returns 2-6% more than wheeling the same horse in an exacta, and 4-8% better than pressing the key-to-all-to-all button in the trifecta.

Most tracks don't try very hard to inform their players of takeout rates. There might be a note in small print in the program, or on the track's website, but don't count on it. It's something like asking you to buy a car without telling you the price.

The list on the right shows the range of takeouts for all U.S. tracks.

Some states mandate specific takeout rates for all tracks within its borders. However, in other states, tracks may offer differing takeout rates for some bets. For instance, Del Mar offers its pick 5 for just 14%, while its upstate California neighbor, Golden Gate, charges 24% for the same bet. In Louisiana, Evangeline Downs charges 12% for its pick 3, while Delta Downs, Fairgrounds, and Louisiana Downs offer the bet with a 25% takeout.

Certainly, one factor in deciding where to place your money is the takeout rate at any particular track that interests you, along with specific pool rates. For instance, if you enjoy playing the pick 5 in Kentucky, your choices ranges from a 14% takeout at Kentucky

	WPS	E	T/S/P	DD	P3/4/6	P5
Arizona	21	22	26	22	26	15
Arkansas	17	21	21	21	21	-
California	15-17	23-24	24-25	20-24	24-25	14-25
Colorado	19	14	25	24	25	-
Delaware	17	19	25	19	25	15
Florida	17	20-21	15-26	18-20	15-20	15-18
Illinois	17	21	25	21	15-25	15
Indiana	18	22	22	22	22	-
Iowa	17	20	20-23	20	15-19	15
Kentucky	16-18	18-22	19-22	19-22	14-22	14-22
Louisiana	17	21	25	21	12-25	25
Maryland	18	21	26	21	15-26	12
Mass.	15	15	15	15	15	-
Michigan	17	28	28	28	28	-
Minnesota	15	18	18	18	18	18
Nebraska	18	20	25	20	20	20
New Jersey	17	19	25	19	15-25	15
New Mexico	19	22-25	25	22-25	25	-
New York	16-18	19-20	25	19	15-25	15-25
Ohio	18	23	23	23	15-23	23
Oklahoma	18	21	24	21	24-25	-
Oregon	18	21	22	21	14-22	15
Pennsylvania	17	20	25-31	20	23-26	25
Texas	18	21	25	12-25	12-25	12
Washington	16	22	22	22	22	22
West Virginia	17	19	22-25	19	22-25	25

WPS win-place-show

E exactas

T/S trifectas/superfectas/pentafectas

DD daily double

P3/4/6 pick 3, pick 4, and pick 6

P5 pick 5

Numbers are rounded up (e.g. 22.50 is listed as 23)

When a range is listed, takeout varies with bet and track.

Downs to 19% at Keeneland to 22% at Churchill Downs, Ellis Park, and Turfway.

At any particular track, the rates often vary from one bet to another. You would think that a track that offers a low-takeout bet would trumpet this with the enthusiasm of a discount mattress store, but that's rarely the case.

For instance, here are the Maryland tracks' takeout rates, rounded off:

- Pick 3—26%
- Pick 4—26%
- Pick 5—12%

Now why would you play a pick 4 at Pimlico when the pick 5 offers the multiple-win exotic bet at half the cost?

And this from Kentucky's Turfway Park:

- Pick 3—22%
- Pick 4—14%
- Pick 5—22%

The plan here would be to skip the pick 3 and pick 5 and play only the pick 4.

If you're planning to attack a circuit, be aware of the varying takeouts. A method which might be successful in California (where the win takeout is 15.43%), might be a loser in neighboring Arizona (where the win takeout is 21%). A call to your track's mutuels department should suffice, or check out horseplayersassociation.org.

While it may seem that only a few

percent shouldn't matter much, it does – particularly as the amount of money you're betting increases. Check the annual losses for a typical player at two different rates (15% vs. 25%):

Amount Bet	15% Takeout	25% Takeout
\$2,000	\$300	\$500
\$20,000	\$3,000	\$5,000
\$200,000	\$30,000	\$50,000

Generally, you'll need to pass more races into a 20% takeout than into a 16% takeout, because a horse that would be 3-1 with the lower takeout might be just 5-2 with the higher takeout, and these add up. Take a look at a sample situation:

Pool size:	\$100,000
Bet on Horse A:	\$30,000
With 16% takeout:	\$5.60
With 20% takeout:	\$5.20

While this may not seem like much of a difference, over a long series of plays the payout differential can be costly.

The takeout shouldn't be your sole consideration in deciding which tracks and which pools to play. The takeout percentages need to be balanced against the ease of playing locally, the availability of getting information for distant tracks, the learning curve associated with playing a new circuit, and other factors.

But take the takeout seriously.

Takeouts are a tricky business, in that the takeout must be sufficient for the track to pay its expenses and purses, but not so high that players take their action elsewhere. And takeout fees go to other entities as well – breeder's awards, workers' compensation funds, state commission administrative costs, off-track stabling locations, satellite expense funds, and much more.

Sometimes, state legislators and horsemen's groups foolishly believe that gamblers never notice the rising takeouts. But whether players do or don't notice the takeouts, it doesn't matter, because the drip-drip-drip of the takeout causes their bankrolls to shrink, which causes handle to shrink, which causes the entire game to shrink.

Barry Meadow is the author of Money Secrets At The Racetrack. For seven years, he published the newsletter Meadow's Racing Monthly. In 2014, he won the first-ever Ron Rippey Award for handicapping media. His newly revised website, trpublishing.com, features a number of free handicapping articles. To be notified about his upcoming book, send an e-mail to barry@trpublishing.com requesting to be on his mailing list.



Survive Inevitable Losing Streaks

By Frank Cotolo

OVER THE DECADES I HAVE WATCHED players lose races while on a losing streak because the string of failures was interpreted as “doing something wrong.” I use quotes because that is the stock phrase I have heard from players when the time between cashing tickets became too long for them. The very concept that one is losing bets because one is “doing something wrong” is folderol. It’s a concept that assumes when you win a bet you have “done something right,” which is equally as nonsensical.

Gamblers in general are very hard on themselves when losing and far too self-complementary when winning. Pari-mutuel racing players may be the worst types of gamblers when it comes to their expectations for winning, because they feel there is far more information available to provide a winning wager than a gambler tossing dice or trying to read an opponent in a poker game.

Often accompanying the notion that loss equals “doing something wrong” is the desire to recalibrate their handicapping/wagering approaches, hoping to correct the mistakes they feel are sending them to the poorhouse. Certainly, mistakes are made in race-betting campaigns but to try to balance the notion of “doing something

wrong” with trying to do something right simply never works. That should be enough to convince a player that altering the way they have had success in the past doesn’t guarantee success is only a bet away but human nature doesn’t allow such wisdom to override the misnomer.

Dangerous Change

The top players in the game develop means to wager, using facts and figures and judgment and experience to battle their foes in pari-mutuel pools. However, when they lose a single or a dozen wagers they don’t sit back and wonder if the loss has to do with ineptitude. These people are clear about the process they use to chase success. These people understand how little control they have over what goes on during a race after scrutinizing every element available to them for making a profitable decision. These people know that luck plays a big role in any circumstance and how not to take it personally when luck is not contributing to the results desired.

The wisdom derives from a proverb that became popular by President Abraham Lincoln. Running to be re-elected during what was arguably the United States’ most tenuous era

to that point, the President quoted a Dutch farmer who warned it is unwise “to change horses in midstream.” As a metaphor, it has come to mean one should not alter successful methods of doing something even when things looked bleak. Smart, successful long-run pari-mutuel players know this is true for those in search of profiting from the game.

It should come as no surprise to any player thinking he or she is “doing something wrong” by losing many successive races, that successful bettors have to deal with losing streaks, too, and that they are exposed to feeling humbled by the experience as well as are the two- and 10-dollar bettors. But the successful player doesn’t immediately call a meeting with his senses to seek for a problem that is delaying a win.

I knew a man (I will call him Delaney to assure his privacy) who played a very large bankroll on the California thoroughbred circuit in the 1980s. One season, he began with great hopes for success, since his last two campaigns at Hollywood Park and Santa Anita were hugely profitable. Delaney began a new meet at Santa Anita and within a few weeks had lost \$30,000 of his bankroll. When he took two days off

before returning, a friend asked if he was well. "I'm down thirty grand," Delaney said. "Does that sound like I am feeling well?"

"So where were you for two days?" his friend said.

"Airing out," Delaney said. "I needed a short break."

"Did you figure out what you have been doing wrong?"

to continue his wagering campaign. At the end of the meet, by the way, Delaney had made back most of his stake by playing exactly as he had been doing successfully the two meets before he ran into his losing streak.

The Panic Button

Resilience is a quality that seasoned players acquire, especially when they

the common player need be a victim of his or herself. Pushing the panic button is something players do on their own under various self-inflicted pressures. The fact that anything can happen to anyone betting on racehorses is rarely taken as the truth.

I knew another player who ran a string of seconds while wagering to win. He thought he figured out what was wrong, so he played his horses to place. Suddenly, they began to finish in third by the dozen, so he started betting to show and sure enough, they began to finish off the board. Finally, betting a horse to show, that horse won and paid over a hundred dollars to win. The guy felt worse than he did during his entire losing experience.

Whatever works for your success should never be abandoned, even though sometimes the bad times come more often than the good ones. Once you change horses midstream, you could discover that the new horse brings you more trouble than the one who took you to the midstream, no matter how difficult it was reaching the halfway point.

“Gamblers in general are very hand on themselves when losing and far too self-complementary when winning.”

Delaney looked at his friend, rolled his eyes and said, "Yes. I was losing too much." Delaney did nothing to change how he was playing. He merely took two days off to clear his mind – airing out, as he called it – and he returned

keep records and have financial evidence of how the ways they handicap and wager are successful. Learning from those who have and continue to do better than most common players is important because there is no reason

