

THE BUCKEYE Harness Horseman

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The Official Publication of the
Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association



SPYDER THE STRIKER & WINNING TICKET

Shine In Sire Stakes





Ohio Sires Stakes 2021 Schedule



Four \$40,000-\$60,000 Legs for 2 & 3-Year-Olds
Eight \$300,000 Championships for 2 & 3-Year-Olds
Eight \$75,000 Consolations for 2 & 3-Year-Olds

Chronological Schedule

| Date | Day | Track | Age/Gender/Gait | Leg |
|---------|----------|-----------------|--|-------------|
| May 2 | Sunday | Miami Valley | 3-Year-Old Filly Trot 3-Year-Old Filly Pace | 1 1 |
| May 3 | Monday | Miami Valley | 3-Year-Old Colt Trot 3-Year-Old Colt Pace | 1 1 |
| June 5 | Saturday | Northfield Park | 3-Year-Old Colt Trot 3-Year-Old Filly Pace | 2 2 |
| June 19 | Saturday | Scioto Downs | 3-Year-Old Colt Pace | 2 |
| June 26 | Saturday | Scioto Downs | 3-Year-Old Filly Trot | 2 |
| July 9 | Friday | Scioto Downs | 2-Year-Old Colt Trot 2-year-Old Filly Trot | 1 1 |
| July 10 | Saturday | Northfield Park | 2-Year-Old Colt Pace 2-Year-Old Filly Pace | 1 1 |
| July 16 | Friday | Scioto Downs | 3-Year-Old Filly Pace | 3 |
| July 17 | Saturday | Northfield Park | 2-Year-Old Colt Trot 2-Year-Old Filly Trot 3-Year-Old Filly Trot | 2 2 3 |
| July 23 | Friday | Scioto Downs | 3-Year-Old Colt Trot | 3 |
| July 24 | Saturday | Scioto Downs | 2-Year-Old Colt Pace 2-Year-Old Filly Pace | 2 2 |
| July 31 | Saturday | Northfield Park | 3-Year-Old Colt Pace | 3 |
| Aug 13 | Friday | Scioto Downs | 2-Year-Old Filly Trot 2-Year-Old Filly Pace | 3 3 |
| Aug 14 | Saturday | Northfield Park | 2-year-Old Colt Trot 2-Year-Old Colt Pace 3-Year-Old Colt Trot | 3 3 4 |
| Aug 20 | Friday | Scioto Downs | 3-Year-Old Filly Trot 3-Year-Old Filly Pace | 4 4 |
| Aug 21 | Saturday | Scioto Downs | 3-Year-Old Colt Pace 2-Year-Old Colt Trot 2-Year-Old Colt Pace | 4 4 4 |
| Aug 22 | Sunday | Northfield Park | 2-Year-Old Filly Trot 2-Year-Old Filly Pace | 4 4 |
| Sept 4 | Saturday | Scioto Downs | 4-Year-Olds & Up \$85,000 Veteran Championships | |
| Sept 5 | Sunday | Northfield Park | 2- & 3-Year-Olds \$300,000 Super Night Championships | |
| Oct 2 | Friday | Dayton Raceway | 2- & 3-Year-Olds \$75,000 Consolations | |

Divisional Schedule

| 2-Year-Old Colt Trot | | 2-Year-Old Filly Trot | |
|--|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1-Scioto Downs | Fri, July 9 | 1-Scioto Downs | Fri, July 9 |
| 2-Northfield Park | Sat July 17 | 2-Northfield Park | Sat, July 17 |
| 3-Northfield Park | Sat, Aug 14 | 3-Scioto Downs | Fri, Aug 13 |
| 4-Scioto Downs | Sat Aug 21 | 4-Northfield Park | Sun, Aug 22 |
| CH-Northfield Park | Sun, Sept 5 | CH-Northfield Park | Sun, Sept 5 |
| Con-Dayton Raceway | Sat, Oct 2 | Con-Dayton Raceway | Sat, Oct 2 |
| 2-Year-Old Colt Pace | | 2-Year-Old Filly Pace | |
| 1-Northfield Park | Sat, July 10 | 1-Northfield Park | Sat, July 10 |
| 2-Scioto Downs | Sat, July 24 | 2-Scioto Downs | Sat, July 24 |
| 3-Northfield Park | Sat, Aug 14 | 3-Scioto Downs | Fri, Aug 13 |
| 4-Scioto Downs | Sat, Aug 21 | 4-Northfield Park | Sun, Aug 22 |
| CH-Northfield Park | Sun, Sept 5 | CH-Northfield Park | Sun, Sept 5 |
| Con-Dayton Raceway | Sat, Oct 2 | Con-Dayton Raceway | Sat, Oct 2 |
| 3-Year-Old Colt Trot | | 3-Year-Old Filly Trot | |
| 1-Miami Valley | Mon, May 3 | 1-Miami Valley | Sun, May 2 |
| 2-Northfield Park | Sat, June 5 | 2-Scioto Downs | Sat, June 26 |
| 3-Scioto Downs | Fri, July 23 | 3-Northfield Park | Sat July 17 |
| 4-Northfield Park | Sat, Aug 14 | 4-Scioto Downs | Fri, Aug 20 |
| CH-Northfield Park | Sun, Sept 5 | CH-Northfield Park | Sun, Sept 5 |
| Con-Dayton Raceway | Sat, Oct 2 | Con-Dayton Raceway | Sat, Oct 2 |
| 3-Year-Old Colt Pace | | 3-Year-Old Filly Pace | |
| 1-Miami Valley | Mon, May 3 | 1-Miami Valley | Sun, May 2 |
| 2-Scioto Downs | Sat, June 19 | 2-Northfield Park | Sat, June 5 |
| 3-Northfield Park | Sat, July 31 | 3-Scioto Downs | Fri, July 16 |
| 4-Scioto Downs | Sat, Aug 21 | 4-Scioto Downs | Fri, Aug 20 |
| CH-Northfield Park | Sun, Sept 5 | CH-Northfield Park | Sun, Sept 5 |
| Con-Dayton Raceway | Sat, Oct 2 | Con-Dayton Raceway | Sat, Oct 2 |
| Veteran Trot & Veteran Mare Trot Veteran Pace & Veteran Mare Pace | | | |
| Scioto Downs Saturday, September 4 | | | |



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Beaver Trainees

SHINE EARLY

 BY ROGER HUSTON

Sleeping Single

The Ohio stake season started with a bang for trainer Chris Beaver and his charges as he racked up wins in both the Buckeye Stallion Series and the Ohio Sire Stakes.

Beaver, who winters in Florida with his three-year-olds, brought them north ready for the racing season. While home in Ohio, he splits his time at his farm north of Delaware and the Delaware County Fairgrounds as he preps them to begin racing at Miami Valley.

The start of the season at Miami Valley included the James Hackett Memorial, the Scarlet and Gray Series and the first legs of the Buckeye Stallion Series and the Ohio Sires Stakes.

Beaver's early success in the Hackett and Scarlet and Gray was mild compared to what took place the last weekend in April when his stable took home more than \$100,000 in purses with 10 starters.

"I can't recall having so much success at one track in a 30-day period," Beaver said. "We train our three-year-olds in Florida and when we ship north, they are really tight and ready to go."

Beaver said it usually takes two to three weeks to get the kinks out and get used to the change in tracks.

The big weekend started with the Stallion Series action April 30 when there were seven divisions of three-year-old pacers. Beaver's Sleeping Single had to wait until the fifth division but didn't disappoint. The son of Racing Hill out of I-Lady with Dan Noble driving grabbed the lead after the three-quarter pole and cruised to an easy five-lengths win in 1:54.3.

Beaver's stable has about a hundred horses, but pacers are just a small part.

"I have a few each year and Sleeping Single has been coming along well. Dan has done a good job with him," Beaver said.

On Saturday, May 1, the three-year-old filly trotters took center stage with Beaver winning two of the four divisions.

First to visit the winners circle for Beaver was Irish Princess by Triumphant Caviar out of Irish Rainbow with Aaron Merriman in 1:58. Irish Princess finished second in the first leg of the Sire Stakes as a two-year-old last year. Beaver said they have been taking it slow with her.

"She had surgery on both knees last year," Beaver said. "Maybe she can make the jump later this season. She definitely has got a lot of speed. Hopefully, she will carry on and be in sire stakes later on."

Beaver also picked up a win with Fanciful Invention by Triumphant Caviar out of Reinvent as Merriman won in 1:57.3.

"She is a pretty well-bred filly," he said. "I bought her dam at the Delaware sale and she is a nice mare. I bred her to Triumphant Caviar."

Beaver said the filly has speed but is a little tough to manage.

"She's a little aggressive, a little bit foul gaited, but she has had a nice start this year," Beaver said.

Another filly in the Beaver stable is Chip It In by Break The Bank K out of Chippiesbrownsugar. Chip It In finished second in the fourth division, losing at the wire by a head.

"When I trained her dam at two, I thought she was the real deal," Beaver said "She is clean gaited. She is big and strong and covers the ground."

Chip It In won the first leg of the sires stake last year in her only win of the year. Beaver said she struggled the rest of the season.

"I think she has been a little better this year," he said. "A clean gaited horse like that, they do learn to go faster. She seems to be headed that way."

The good fortune continued May 3 when the three-year-old colt trotters took to the track. Winning Ticket, the Triumphant Caviar – Lotto Winner gelding, continued his winning ways as he won easily in 1:55.3 for Merriman. With wins in the Hackett and Scarlet and Gray, Winning Ticket is a perfect four-for-four in 2021.

"He is a very fast horse and has never been beat when he trotted a clean line," Beaver said. "He's just a really good horse; when he is in full flight, he's pretty good." Beaver feels Winning Ticket is a lot better this year after castrating him at the end of last season.

"Last year, most of his problems were when he was sitting in a hole and they would jam



Irish Princess

up in front of him. He wanted to go more and would get a little rank,” said Beaver, who has high hopes for Winning Ticket this year. “I don’t think I have had a Triumphant Caviar any better than him at this point.”

Beaver hit the board with Tango With Me who finished third in the race. The Deep Chip out of Dancewithme Chuck offspring has banked more than \$77,000 and is still a maiden.

“He is a very professional horse. He picks up checks,” Beaver said.

Tango With Me is still producing despite not being 100 percent.

“We’ve been fighting some high liver counts in the last few starts,” Beaver said. “He hasn’t been as sharp of late. We’re trying to get that sorted out, it has been difficult when the liver counts are out of whack.”

Not to be out done by his stable mate, Spyder The Striker picked up his first win of the year with Beaver’s charges finishing first, second and fourth in the second division of the three-year-old colt trot.

Beaver had high hopes for the son of Uncle Peter our of Elena last season.

“I thought he was going to be able to race outside of Ohio besides the Sires Stakes. He ended up breaking a coffin bone in a training mile after just two starts,” Beaver said. “We have had to bring him back from that and it bothers him a little bit but is starting to come around, getting it together.”

Beaver doesn’t think Spyder The Striker will be the same as before the injury, but he is learning to race.

Perron, last year’s two-year-old Sires Stakes champion, finished a nose behind Spyder while Panzano finished fourth.

Perron is getting better, and Beaver says he expects the My MVP colt to give Winning Ticket a run in the end.

Panzano by Corraggioso out of Grace and Charlie has been close this season. After winning a Hackett elimination in his first start of the year, Panzano finished second to Winning Ticket in the last two races before the fourth-place finish.



Fanciful Invention

Beaver also hit the board in the filly trot with Ozma. The daughter Triumphant Caviar out of Evanora finished third for Beaver and Merriman in 1:55.

“Ozma gives the same effort every time,” he said. “She is always close. I thought she

raced well. She looked like she might get up and win it, but that is a very strong group of fillies.”

Beaver’s barn is filled with Triumphant Caviar offspring. He likes the toughness characteristic that the stallion passes down.

“They keep coming and there is a little more depth to them than your average horse here in Ohio,” Beaver said. “If you can unlock that, you get a pretty good horse to race.”

Beaver said they are a little tough to train and are not good gaited early.

“I wear trotting hobbles on most of them, but they can go further than a lot of the breeds here in Ohio and that makes a difference.”

As for trotting hobbles, it’s almost a sure thing for horses trained by Beaver.

“I have got half of my two-year-olds in them and probably two-thirds of my three-year-olds wearing the hobbles.”

By the time Beaver’s two-year-olds get to the track, there won’t be many in Ohio that don’t wear them.

“I think it’s the nature of racing in the state racing on half mile tracks, racing on the front end,” he said. “You have to be able to leave the gate and have them bullet proof

for the drivers, or you don’t have a chance. That’s the way I look at it.”

PHOTOS: Brad Conrad

SPORTS GAMBLING BILL INTRODUCED

After several prior legislative sessions have introduced Bills, H.B. 194 (which underwent 17 revisions) and S.B. 111, which had one hearing, a new sports gambling bill was introduced May 6, 2021, in the Ohio Senate, S.B. 176. S.B. 176 is co-sponsored by Senators Niraj Antani (District 6) and Nathan Manning (District 13). With significant opposition after introduction, S.B. 176 underwent a major revision in its first hearing and was replaced by a Substitute Bill on May 12, 2021. The Bill will change and morph rapidly as with prior session Bills and the House has not yet acted to introduce a Bill in the current Session.

The Ohio Senate Select Committee on Gaming released details on the Senate version of the sports wagering, which was touted as providing a free market for competition unlike any other sports wagering state. Wagers can include (requiring approval by the Ohio Casino Control Commission): parlays, over-under, money line, in-game wagers, single-game bets, teaser bets, in-play bets, proposition bets, pools, pari-mutuel sports wagering pools, straight bets, or any

other wagering approved by the Commission.

The Bill provides for two-tiered implementation for a “sports wagering agent”, 20 Class A (mobile) and 20 Class B (brick and mortar) licenses for sports wagering, with regulation by the Ohio Casino Control Commission. The license fee as proposed is one million dollars per license for three years. In both cases the sports wagering agent must have a substantial connection to Ohio and minimum capital expenditures related to the sports wagering facility will be implemented by regulation. Casinos and racetrack locations can locate a sports wagering facility on their existing property footprint.

The Bill also provides for legalization of a sports lottery to be offered and regulated by the Ohio Lottery Commission. The sports lottery will be a 10% takeout pari-mutuel pool for sports, which will offer one choice in the lottery pool for a winner or loser. The Bill would also legalize eBingo, which is pursued as a duplication of instant bin-

go, which is currently (and as proposed) permitted and regulated in paper form as a charitable game by the Ohio Attorney General in veterans halls and fraternal organizations. The Bill also provides for a study on iLottery, with the formation of a committee that will investigate and report on the feasibility and legality of an Internet based lottery program expansion by January 1, 2022.

Chairman of the Senate Select Gaming Committee Kirk Schuring (District 29) represented confidence in the Bill, saying it will, “win the day with the House and with the Governor’s office” because, “you don’t pass Bills unless you have the support of both Chambers and the Governor’s office”.

The Bill is unlikely to go into the current Biennial Budget Bill and is more likely to accompany some other legislation with a high likelihood of passage. Senator Schuring has indicated passage by June 2021 with the ability for sports wagering January 1, 2022.

Ohio Gambling Revenue Up Again

For the second consecutive month, revenue from gaming at Ohio’s casinos and racinos was setting a record. As some COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, the amount of money wagered has been on the rise.

The 11 casinos and racinos combined to take in more than \$217 million in April, up more than \$1 million from March, when bettors wagered \$215.8 million, which was the most in the nine years of casino gambling in Ohio. The previous record was a little more than \$184 million in March 2019.

The state’s seven racinos took in \$124.5 million, while the four casino’s took in \$92.6 million. Both racino and casino revenue was up from March

Columbus’ Hollywood Casino led all properties with \$24.7 million. The top racino was MGM Northfield Park which took in \$24.5 million.

In addition to MGM Northfield Park, Miami Valley Raceway was the only other racino to outperform the previous month. Miami Valley was up from \$19.3 million to \$19.4 million.

Eldorado Scioto Downs and Dayton Hollywood were both down month to month. Eldorado was down from \$22.4 million in March to \$21.7 million in April, while Dayton Hollywood was down from \$15.9 million to \$15.3 million.



Governor Lifts Health Orders

Saying it is time, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has lifted all health orders in relation to COVID-19 in the state effective June 3.

“Ohioans have done a fantastic job of protecting each other, their families and themselves,” DeWine said.

The order lifts the state’s mask mandate and social distancing rules. Businesses will be allowed to make their own determinations on whether to maintain mask rules and social distancing. The order will remain in place for nursing homes and assisted-living facilities.

“Each Ohio citizen will make their own decision about wearing a mask, social distancing and how to protect themselves,” DeWine said.

The decision to lift the orders follows a four-week drop in the number of COVID-19 cases in the state. The number of cases per 100,000 residents dropped from 200 cases on April 15 to 123 cases on May 13. The state’s goal was 50 cases per 100,000.

“According to the Center for Disease Control, Ohio’s cases per 100,000 have averaged the past week as the lowest of all our neighboring states and that is great news,” DeWine said.

DeWine says the decision by the Food and Drug Administration to allow 12-15-year-olds to be vaccinated also played a part in the decision.

“The vaccine is here. It’s stronger and better than medical experts ever imagined,” DeWine said during a speech broadcast statewide. “Everyone can now control their own health. Everyone can now control their own destiny.”

The state is urging those that have not been vaccinated or have only received one dose to continue to be vaccinated.

“For those who are not vaccinated, the virus is just as dangerous as ever,” DeWine said. “In fact, because the new variant is more contagious, the virus is really more dangerous than ever.”

DeWine urged business to offer incentives to those that can show they have been vaccinated.

The state announced two initiatives to support the plan. Adults that have been vaccinated will be eligible for five million-dollar drawings and vaccinated teens will have the opportunity to win a four-year scholarship including tuition, room and board, and books to one of the state’s universities.

As of May 13, the Ohio Department of Health reports that more than 36 percent of the state’s population or about 4.25 million people have completed the vaccine, while almost 42 percent of the state’s population have received at least a first dose.

“The vaccine is here. It’s stronger and better than medical experts ever imagined.”

Governor Mike DeWine



ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

The Buckeye Harness Horseman: The official publication of the Ohio Harness Horsemen’s Association is published four times a year. The next issue will be published in May. The deadline to reserve your advertising space is May 1st. **For more information e-mail: publications@OHHA.com.**

Top Of The Stretch Podcast: OHHA Brand Ambassador Roger Huston talks harness racing with drivers, trainers, and others horsemen in the Top of the Stretch podcast. Sponsorship includes open and closing billboard and a :30 second commercial. **For more information e-mail podcast@ohha.com.**

Ohio Fair Racing Coverage: The Ohio Harness Horsemen’s Association will again live stream races from county fairs across the state. In 2021, the OHHA plans to cover over 125 races cards. Last year’s coverage was seen in Ohio as well as 30 other states and nine countries. **For more information about 2021 Ohio Fair Racing coverage email: ffraas@ohha.com**

Improvements Greet Horsemen and Fans at **SCIOTO DOWNS**

When the curtain was raised on the 2021 racing season at Eldorado Scioto Downs, horsemen and fans saw improvements to the facility benefiting both.



Paddock bath stalls

For the horsemen, it was new paddock bath stalls and improvements to the shed row, while fans see upgrades in the clubhouse and on the track apron.

Race secretary Jason Roth said the facility has been neglected.

“The new management (Caesars Entertainment) and my boss Steve Jarmusz said, ‘let’s put some money into this and treat everybody how they should be treated.’”

“Caesars sees what we are trying to do,” Roth said. “I think we are over the curve of gaming companies not wanting to focus on racing. I think Caesars wants to focus on racing. That’s why we are going step by step doing these little projects until we can get the new grandstand and move forward. I think we are headed in the right direction.”

Roth says getting ready this year has been different than years past.

“We had so many projects going on,” he said. “In the past we did a little cleaning, a little painting that was about it. This year, it was trying to get projects completed before we opened.”

In the clubhouse, more than 13,000-square feet of new carpeting was installed. Roth said they also are trying to get the windows in the clubhouse open.

“They have not been open since 1980. We have had electricians and experts in hydraulics come in to see if we can get them opened,” Roth said. “The concern we have is if we get them up, we don’t know if we can get them down.”

Fans will also have more opportunities to place their bets with mutual machines becoming available on all levels.



The clubhouse is looking sharp with new carpet.

“Because of COVID, half of our mutual machines were shut down to provide for social distancing,” Roth said. “We will spread out self-service machines though out the property.”

Roth said the horseplayers will also be able to benefit from earning points through the new rewards program.

Food service for this season is also expanding. Roth said there will be table service for fans on all three tiers on the north end of the grandstand and the bottom tier of the south end. The service will include a full menu on Friday and Saturday nights.

Several cosmetic improvements also have been completed in the grandstand area. The winner’s circle received a makeover, getting the old stucco removed. The apron area received much-needed patchwork paving.

The wagering format for 2021 will remain relatively the same according to Roth.

“We lowered the takeout on the pick-six to 15 percent,” he said. “The carryover of the Superfecta right into the next race seemed to work well last year so we will do 100 percent carryover again this year.”

For the horsemen, improvements have been made to the track, barn area and paddock.

The track was getting close to the base, so they resurfaced the track adding five thousand tons of materials, roughly 250 truckloads to the track.

“We then took a milling machine and went six inches deep and milled the new material with the existing track,” Roth said. “We then graded the track and added more track material.”

Horsemen have also been given the opportunity to train on the new track, which helped get the track race ready for the season.

“When we first started, the track just needed horses on it,” driver Tyler Smith said. “After the first three or four days it has been very good. The track is setting up perfect.”

With financial assistance of the Ohio Harness Horsemen’s Association, improvements were also made to the backstretch.

Improvements that OHHA Director Scott Mogan said were needed. “The biggest improvements as far as I’m concerned is the barn area with the aisle ways being concreted and gravel put in. The caretakers are no longer working in the mud when it rains. There is no water running in the shed row.”



Concrete and gravel have been added to the barn area.

Mogan said it is nice to see Eldorado making the investment.

“There hasn’t been a lot that way recently. We have made efforts to get it done in the past,” Mogan said. “But With Joe Morris coming in, it seemed to make a difference.”



New windows were installed in driver's lounge

250 truckloads of material was added to the track

Improvements were made to the locker room.

He is horseman friendly. It's nice to see them willing to spend money, not only for the patrons, but the horsemen."

been enough concrete to put in a new paddock floor for a new paddock. The concrete is nice; the bath stalls are nice; the gravel is nice. It's a lot nicer than it used to be."

"It's nice up there, especially with the new windows in the lounge," Page said. "There was so much condensation in the past, you couldn't see out."

Roth said the new concrete aisle ways is part of the continued effort to improve the backstretch.

In the paddock, nine bath stalls have been installed, which trainer Jeff Smith said makes things easier.

Roth said the total investment for the improvements will be close to \$1 million.

"Over the past three years, the ship-in barns have had new roofs, plumbing and electric," he said.

"When you are back in the barn you used to have to try to hold your horse outside and they are not used to it," Smith said. "It was hard when it was raining and windy. This makes it easier."

"We have done a lot of work, but we still have a lot more work to do," Roth said. "Everyone's first question is when is the grandstand coming? All I can say is there are drawings of what the new structure will look like, but as to when, I don't know."

Trainer Steve Carter said the improvements are long overdue.

Improvements also were made to the driver's locker room and lounge. Driver Chris Page appreciates the improvements.

"It is nice to see they are showing some effort to make it easier for the horsemen," Carter said. "When I first saw the concrete by the barns, I thought that would have

IT'S ACADEMIC WINS CHARLIE HILL BY ROGER HUSTON



It's Academic

Driver Yannick Gringras and It's Academic

The first Grand Circuit Stake of the season in Ohio was held May 6 at Eldorado Scioto Downs. Seven trotters went to the post in the \$135,000 Charlie Hill Memorial.

world record last season at Delaware, Ohio in 1:53.1. With the win, It's Academic has won three of seven starts this season and upped his lifetime earnings to \$560,688.

It's Academic was dominant in the wire-to-wire victory winning in 1:52.3. Yannick Gringras cut out fractions of 28, 56, 1:25 and came a final panel in 27.3 for the victory by two lengths over Mission Accepted (Chris Page) and Majestic Player A (Brett Miller). The \$10,000 supplemental entry Whata Swan, reined by Trace Tetrick, finished fourth.

Guardian Angel As, trained by Anette Lorentzon and driven by Tim Tetrick, finished fifth in her first start of the season with Pure Chance and Sky Castles rounding out the field.

It's Academic, the four-year-old son of Uncle Peter, is trained by Ron Burke for owner Bradley Grant, of Ontario, Canada, and set a

The race is named for Charlie Hill, the founder of Scioto Downs, which is located just south of Columbus.

PHOTOS: Brad Conrad

FIRST LEG OF SIRES STAKES IN THE BOOKS

The 2021 Ohio Sires Stakes opened with the first leg at Miami Valley Raceway May 2-3. The fillies took center stage first with three races, two paces and one trot, while the colts followed the next day with two divisions in each gait.



Lady Arthur

In the first division of the \$50,000 filly pace, Ronnie Wrenn Jr. took Lady Arthur to the lead and never looked back, winning in 1:53.3 for trainer and co-owner Dr.

Ian Moore. The daughter of Arthur Blue Chip out of April Three won for the second time this year and has now earned \$110,000 for Moore and his co-owners, RG McGroup and Serge Savard. Lady Arthur was a two-length winner ahead of She Knows It All with Bab's Jansen finishing third.

In the only filly trot, which went for \$60,000, Wrenn won for the second time with Celebrate With Me in 1:54.2. Trained by Ron Burke, Celebrate With Me sat third at the top of the stretch and rallied down the stretch for the half-length victory over Katie's Lucky Day for the Burke Stable, Howard Taylor, Weaver Bruscelli and Knox Services.



Celebrate With Me



Summer Touch

In the second \$50,000 division of filly pacers, Summer Touch with Chris Page took control past the quarter pole and cruised to a two-length victory in 1:53.1 to give Burke

his second OSS win of the day. Leave Her Wild and Rainy Day Chic finished second and third. Summer Touch, a daughter of Well Said out of Real Touch, is owned by Burke Racing Stable, Knox Services, Slaughter Racing and Weaver Bruscelli. Summer Touch won the Two-Year-Old Filly Pace Sire Stakes Championship last year.

On the colt side of the ledger there were two \$50,000 divisions each for the trotters and the pacers.

In the first division for the trotters, Winning Ticket, the son of Triumphant Caviar out of Lotto Winner, charged to the lead from the eighth post position with Aaron Merriman on the reins to win by two-lengths in 1:55.3 for trainer Chris Beaver. Peter's Royalty was second while Tango With Me was third. Beaver co-owns Winning Ticket with Steve Zeehandelaar, Tim Homan and Jim Burnett. The win was the fourth of the year for Winning Ticket.

Merriman and Beaver teamed up in the second division as Spyder The Striker charged down the stretch to nip stablemate Perron and Lockbox by a nose, winning in 1:56.3. The son of Uncle Peter is owned by Beaver, Charles Beaver, Leo Fleming and VIP Internet Stable. Spyder The Striker won two Sires Stakes legs last year in his only two starts of the year.



Four-Star Flash

In the first of two \$50,000 pacing divisions, Four-Star Flash remained perfect in 2021. Wrenn and Four-Star Flash sat fourth entering the top of the stretch and charged home

to win by three-quarters of a length in 1:52, beating I'm Sorry Man and Sir Charles Of Sky. Trained by Brian Brown, the son of Western Vintage, out of Keladi Blue Chip, is owned by Hutchison Harness, Daniel Wozniak, David Van Dusen and Acadia Farms.

In the second division, Heart Of Chewbacca with Dan Noble cruised to an easy seven-lengths over Truly Noble and Bare It Hill in 1:51.2. Trained by Burke for owners Dennis Owens and Norman Rae Racing LLC, the son of Break On The Beach collected his third win of the season in four starts.



Heart of Chewbacca

The second leg for the three-year-old filly pacers and colt trotters is scheduled for Saturday, June 5 at Northfield Park. The three-year-old colt pacers will race June 19 at Northfield Park while Scioto Downs will host the three-year-old filly trotters June 26.

PHOTOS: Brad Conrad

Busy First Leg of **BUCKEYE STALLION SERIES**

Miami Valley Raceway hosted 18 divisions of the first leg of the Buckeye Stallion Series, April 30 and May 1.



King Cruiser



Dontforgetlittleman



Jogging Sweet



Pompatuse of Love

On Friday, 10 divisions of Ohio sired colts, seven divisions of pacers and three divisions of trotters, went postward for \$17,500 in each race.

In the first division for pacers, King Cruiser with Tyler Smith went gate to wire for trainer Jeff Nisonger in 1:53.2 to pick up the victory. The 1:53.2 was the quickest mile of the night.

Despite being parked at the three-quarter pole, Casecon roared down the stretch to win the second division by five lengths in 1:53.3 for Brett Miller and trainer Virgil Morgan Jr.

In the third division, Smooth Racer, with Ronnie Wrenn Jr., led the entire way to win in 1:56.3 for trainer Calvin Hollar.

In the first division for the trotters, Iikedecupcakes rallied down the stretch for driver-trainer Sandy Beatty in 1:59.1 for the victory.

Rockin Airway was a wire-to-wire winner in 1:55.4 as Miller picked up his second win of the night for trainer Ryan Miller in the fourth division for the pacers.

Dan Noble guided Dontforgetlittlman for trainer Deborah Swartz in 1:58.1 to pick up the victory in the second division for the trotters. The 1:58.1 was the fastest trot of the night.

In the fifth division of pacers, Sleeping Single was a five-length winner for Dan Noble and trainer Chris Beaver 1:54.3.

In the third division of trotters, Chris Page guided Credit Ace to the lead and never looked back, winning in 1:59.3 for trainer Ron Burke.

Miller again teamed up with Morgan to collect his third BSS win of the night in driving Odds On Shaggy to the come-from-behind victory in 1:54.3.

In the final BSS race of the night, Miller made it four wins, this time for trainer Michael Prickett, with Cyclone Union Jack, winning in 1:53.3.

On Saturday, eight more Stallion Series races were on the card, four paces and four trots.

In the opening BSS race of the day, Aaron Merriman collected his first of three stallion-series wins on the day in guiding Irish Princess to the three-quarter length win for trainer Chris Beaver in 1:58.

The second division of trotters went to Sewin Sue and Chris Page. Page guided the Ron Burke trainee to the wire-to-wire win in 1:57.2.

Merriman and Beaver teamed up again in the third division as Fanciful Invention rallied late to win by a nose at the wire in 1:57.3.

The pacers were next up as Page picked up his second BSS win of the day, guiding Finesse to the victory in 1:54.3 for trainer Kent Sherman.

The final trot of the day went to Kurt Sugg and trainer Eddie Miller with Jogging Sweet. Sugg drove Jogging Sweet to the win in 1:56.4.

In the second division of pacers, Kayne Kaufman had the lines as Pompatuse Of Love was a winner in 1:54.1 for trainer Kim Dailey.

Diamond Official with Hunter Myers hung on down the stretch to win by a head for trainer Trent Stohler in 1:54.1.

Merriman picked up his third BSS win in the final series race of the night as he rallied Pal O Mine Hanover down the stretch to win by a head for trainer Terry Hall in 1:54.3.

The second leg of the Buckeye Stallion Series begins June 11 at Scioto Downs with the Three-Year-Old-Colt Trotters. The Three-Year-Old-Filly Pacers are scheduled to race at Northfield Park on June 27. The colt pacers will go July 4 with the filly trotters going July 5, both at Northfield Park.

PHOTOS: Brad Conrad

HACKETT MEMORIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Heart Of Chewbacca, Free Thinker, Winning Ticket, Sizzle Hanover Claim Titles

The Ohio-sired stakes season opened with the James K. Hackett Memorial races at Miami Valley Raceway, and they did not disappoint after two Ron Burke-trained three-year-olds claimed titles.

Heart of Chewbacca and Free Thinker won the pacing events for the Burke Stable, while the Chris Beaver-trained Winning Ticket won the colt trot with Sizzle Hanover winning the filly trot for Randy Bendis.

The first of the four \$40,000 Hackett championship races was the three-year-old filly trot. Swizzle Hanover, a daughter of Uncle Peter, with Mike Wilder in the bike, was impressive winning in 1:55.4. Despite a second-place finish in an elimination heat, the public sent Swizzle Hanover to post as the 3-5 favorite, and she looked the part throughout the championship tilt. Wilder patiently marched his filly forward before clearing to the front as the 28.2 first-quarter beam was tripped. From there, he raced a mile with splits of 57.3 and 1:26.1, while elimination-winner Ozma (Aaron Merriman) sat nose-to-helmet on his back. Despite his attempt to rally Ozma in the stretch, Merriman couldn't get any closer when the winner crossed the finish line, a little more than a length on the runner-up.



Free Thinker

Merriman sent the heavily favored winning son of Triumphant Caviar immediately to the lead and never got a serious challenge before pulling away by better than three lengths ahead of stablemates Panzano and Tango With Me. Winning Ticket lowered her lifetime record by more than a second with the convincing win.

On the pacing side of the ledger, Free Thinker was a relatively easy winner for three-year-old filly pacers. Chris Page took Free Thinker to the lead at the half-mile and from there it was clear sailing for the daughter from Western Vintage, winning in 1:53.3. It was Free Thinker's third win in nine lifetime starts.



Swizzle Hanover

In the three-year-old colt trot, trainer Chris Beaver sent three to the post while Ron Burke started two entries.

Beaver trainee Winning Ticket and driver Aaron Merriman never had an anxious moment crushing the competition in 1:54. What little competition there was came from the same barn as trainer Chris Beaver harnessed the top-three finishers. That meant 87 percent of the \$40,000 championship purse was sent to Beaver and his stable partners.

In the much-anticipated showdown in the colt pace between Heart of Chewbacca and Charlie May, the race lived up to its billing during the first three-quarters. Brett Miller sent Charlie May to the front from the outside post position in 27.4. Miller tapped the breaks in the second quarter and stopped the halfway timer in 58 seconds. During the third quarter, Dan Noble tipped Heart of Chewbacca out from third and moved quickly alongside his rival. The third quarter was clocked in an amazing 25.2. The pair rounded the final bend nose-to-nose until Charlie May made a speed break, the first of his career, as the pair entered the stretch. That

allowed Heart Of Chewbacca to cruise home an easy open lengths winner.

The memorial races honor Hall-of-Famer James K. Hackett who was born in Madison County, Ohio. Hackett's best year was 1967 when he won the Little Brown Jug with Best of All.

NOBLE, BURKE WIN MIAMI VALLEY TITLES BY GREGG KEIDEL



Congratulating leading driver Dan Noble and leading trainer Ron Burke were Racing Operations Director Ken Rambo, Racing Manager Larry Alexander, OHHA track rep Brett Merkle, Noble's grandmother Nancy Baker, her friend Bob Ridgewood, Race Secretary Gregg Keidel and Noble's brother Sam IV. **Photo:** Brad Conrad

The curtain fell on the 2021 Miami Valley Raceway season May 3. Leading driver Dan Noble and leading trainer Ron Burke were congratulated in the winner's circle immediately after the pair combined to win a \$50,000 Ohio Sires Stakes race with Heart Of Chewbacca.

Noble won 160 races during the 86-day meet to top Brett Miller, Trace Tetrick, Tyler Smith and Chris Page in the standings. All five won more than 120 races, and all five racked up purse earnings topping \$1.2 million.

Burke recorded 54 wins to edge Tyler George, Virgil Morgan Jr. and Christi Noble. All four managed stables that earned more than \$400,000 during the meet.

The 2021 titles were the second for both Noble and Burke in the first eight years of the track's existence.

HANDLE UP AT MIAMI VALLEY

For the eighth consecutive year, the handle at Miami Valley rose substantially during the 2021 meet, which consisted of 86 live race days. All-source average daily handle rose to \$520,308, more than 30 percent higher than the daily average in a season shortened by COVID-19.

To illustrate the consistent improvement Miami Valley has achieved, here are the daily average handles since it opened eight years ago:

2014: \$142,545

2015: \$181,610

2016: \$262,729

2017: \$373,935

2018: \$382,524

2019: \$385,835

2020: \$398,967

2021: \$520,308

"I want to thank everyone – our racing department staff, the horsemen who compete here, and our patrons who support us in increasing numbers," said Ken Ramo, the track's first year director of racing operations. "We will take what we learned this season and work to build on it and make next year even better."

"It has been great watching the steady growth at Miami Valley," said veteran race secretary Gregg Keidel. "Along with our tremendous percentage handle jumps forward in our third and fourth seasons, 2021 has to go down as one of our best years yet."

"I attribute our success to our ability to offer one of the best purse structures anywhere, resulting in a tremendous horse supply provided by hundreds of loyal owners and trainers, a deep and talented drivers colony that assures some of the most competitive racing in the industry, and doing our due diligence to position MVG in the best possible place we can. With an ongoing study to determine the best days and times to race, as well as a little tinkering with our betting format, I see nothing but continuous significant growth at Miami Valley in 2022."

Another indication of the strength of the Miami Valley program, and the confidence that owners and trainers have in it, is the quantity of claims that occur. The 2021 total of 342 successful claims for a total of \$4,455,600, an average of a little more than \$13,000 each, was second only to 2019 in volume.

Live racing will resume at Miami Valley the first week of January 2022.

From Miami Valley



BOURBANS BEST

Scores 50th Career Win BY AYERS RALIFF



Photo: JJ Zamaiko Photography

Bourbans Best paced home for his 50th career victory at MGM Northfield Park on May 11. The 14-year-old veteran, with 444 career starts, also has 55 second- and 57 third-place finishes.

Bourbans Best (Pro Bono Best – Mattachevitz – Matt’s Scooter) started from post three in the evening’s \$5,000 conditioned event. He let his competition carve-out fractions of 27 and 56.1 seconds, before pulling first-over and taking the lead nearing the 1:25.1 three-quarters and eventually besting his competition by two lengths in 1:54.3. He was favored in the race and paid \$4.00 to win.

Bourbans Best has career earnings of \$295,028 with a lifetime mark of 1:52, taken at Northfield. Bourbans Best is a well-traveled campaigner. His 444 starts have been spread across 12 different racing surfaces. The gelding’s richest win was for a purse of \$14,000 in a Late Closing Series Final at Northfield in 2019.

Uriah Miller of Streetsboro, Ohio owns Bourbans Best. Trainer Sam Schillaci called upon Hunter Myers for the winning drive.

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TRACK NOTES



Yanks Dugout **Photo:** Brad Conrad

Yanks Dugout set a track record for age and gait at Miami Valley. The four-year-old Triumphant Caviar gelding with Brett Miller won in 1:53.4 to set the new mark. The win was Yanks Dugout's 10th in 20 lifetime starts for trainer Duke Sugg, who co-owns the horse with his father Ivan.

With racing shut down in Ontario, owners of 2020 O'Brien Award winner Lawless Shadow shipped into Scioto Downs for his first start of the year. The Canadian Two-Year-Old Pacing Colt of the Year did not disappoint, winning by a length in 1:51.1.

Ronnie Wrenn Jr. led the son of Shadow Play to his fifth win in 10 lifetime starts.



Mission Accepted **Photo:** Brad Conrad

It's been first or second for Mission Accepted this year. After starting the year with two second-place finishes, the son of Manofmany-missions, reeled off three straight open wins at Miami Valley before finishing second in the Charlie Hill.

Southwind Amazon had his streak of five open wins at Northfield Park snapped May 2. The 10-year-old son of Camluck finished fourth despite a final quarter of 28.3. Southwind Amazon has won six of 15 starts this year, earning just under \$50,000.

Dan Noble topped Ohio drivers for most wins on a single card when he collected six April 17 at Miami Valley. Five drivers collected five wins on a card. Chris Page did it April 2 at Miami Valley, while Tony Hall (April 3), Aaron Merriman (April 10), Hunter Myers (April 18) and Ronnie Wrenn Jr. (April 21) did it at Northfield Park.

Five drivers topped the \$1 million mark in earnings at Miami Valley for the 2021 meet. Dan Noble, Trace Tetrick, Brett Miller, Chris Page and Tyler Smith all surpassed \$1 million.



Southwind Amazon **Photo:** Brad Conrad

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Merriman Wins 10 In Single Day

BY ROGER HUSTON



Pal O Mine Hanover **Photo:** Brad Conrad



May 1st will be a day that Aaron Merriman will long remember. Merriman collected 10 wins on the day but how he accomplished it is remarkable.

The day began with a 219-mile trip from his home in Northfield, Ohio, to Miami Valley for its 14-race program. Merriman was scheduled to drive in 10 races.

"I am always hopeful going into a program. You really appreciate the good days. You have some great days," Merriman said. "Be happy that you have the opportunity to have them."

The day started off with a win in the first race of the card with Wild Bill for Kris Hinchcliff in 1:50.4. He followed that win in the second race behind Irish Princess in the Buckeye Stallion Series event for three-year-old trotting fillies for trainer Chris Beaver in 1:58.

Merriman picked up his third win of the day in his third drive. In the fifth, another BSS race, Merriman drove Fanciful Invention for Chris Beaver, winning in 1:57.3.

He picked up his fourth win in as many drives in the Open Pace with Yacht Week for Larry Finn in 1:50.3.

Merriman could only muster a third-place finish in his next four drives but got his fifth

win of the day in the 12th race with Pal O Mine Hanover for Terry Hall in 1:54.3.

That closed out the day at Miami Valley for the 42-year-old reinsman. Merriman finished the day with 10 drives, five wins and a third-place finish for a UDRS of .533. The final race went to the post at 4:37 p.m.

At the conclusion of the Miami Valley card, Merriman headed to the parking lot, only to find that his vehicle had been hit by another car.

"I thought to myself, they say racing is a game of inches, little do they know that parking cars is the real challenge at the track," Merriman said.

Merriman made the 219-mile return trip, arriving at MGM Northfield Park in time to drive the seventh race which was going postward at 8:52 p.m.

Just like the day at Miami Valley, Merriman drove winners in his first two races with Alwaysshining Star for Joe Putnam in 1:56.2 and Madelines Craycray for Mervin Schmucker in 1:55.4.

The "Iron Man of Racing" finished third and fourth in his next two drives before winning the 12th race with Hp Xanadu for Joe Putnam in 1:55.3.

In the 13th race, Merriman finished fourth but bounced back to win the last two races of the program for trainer Tobias Troyer with Sapphire Love Chip in 1:56.2 and Cheeky Cherry in 1:56.1.

The final race went to the post at 11:59 p.m.

Merriman finished the night at Northfield with eight drives, five wins and a third for a UDRS of .667. For the day's work, his totals were 18-10-0-2 for a UDRS of .593.

Merriman said he would have liked to keep going.

"I felt like a streak shooter in the NBA on a heater," Merriman said. "It would have been awesome to have a third track after Northfield."

He has won 10 races on a card before, but these 10 wins were different.

"I won 10 before but that was in one card at Northfield," he said. "Never before (have I claimed) 10 wins while driving 438 miles as well."

After a couple of hours of sleep, Merriman was back on the road to Miami Valley. While he was shut out there the following day, his 10-win day is one Merriman won't soon forget.

Brett Miller Wins 9,000th

BY GREGG KEIDEL



Brett Miller urges Water Sports Teen to a nose decision in the final stride of the 10th race at Miami Valley on Saturday to reach 9,000 career triumphs.

Photo: Brad Conrad

Driver Brett Miller reached another coveted career milestone April 24 at Miami Valley Raceway, capturing his 9,000th lifetime win. In the tightest of photo finishes, Miller guided Water Sports Teen to a short-nose score over Red Power and Chris Page. It was the third win on the day for the 47-year-old purple and white clad reinsman.

nine years topping \$5 million.

The affable Miller has driven some of the best horses in the sport during the past two decades for some of the sport's top trainers. He spent more than a decade on the East Coast before returning, in 2018, to his roots in Ohio, where he has won 1,067 races in a little more than two years since.

Brett's career began in 1991 with a single drive. He recorded just one win in 1992 and four in 1993 before his career shifted into high gear. Since 2000, Miller has won more than 200 races for 21 consecutive years, including a career-best 639 in 2004. He has earned more than \$1 million in purses each of those 21 years, including

Miller has won a dash title at both Miami Valley and Hollywood Dayton Raceways since his return to Ohio. There's likely more of those in store as he moves toward the next plateau – 10,000 wins!



OHHA track rep Brett Merkle and Race Secretary Gregg Keidel congratulate Brett Miller on his 9,000th lifetime win. Photo: Brad Conrad

Davis Wins 3,000th at Northfield Park

BY AYERS RATLIFF



Vintage Grand Photo: JJ Zamaiko Photography

aboard Performing Art. His fastest happened in 2013, a 1:48.1 win with Speed Again. He rates the best horse he has ever driven as Let's Drink On It.

Davis had driven more than 20,000 races against many different drivers. However, he credits Mark MacDonald with being the best he has ever driven against.

"I learned a lot driving against him on a consistent basis," Davis explained. "Mark is a very talented driver."

Davis has recorded more than 50 wins in 2021 and is riding an 11-year streak of 100 wins.

Billy Davis Jr. made his 3,000th trip to the winner's circle after winning with Vintage Grand May 2 at Northfield Park.

Davis led at every call with Vintage Grand, winning by 2-3/4 lengths. The 1:55.1 clocking was the 25th career win for the seven-year-old pacer.

The 34-year-old Davis began driving in 2007. His 3,000 wins have helped him garner more than \$22 million in purse earnings.

Davis drove his first race in April 2007 at Northlands Park Raceway. That first drive resulted in a last-place finish after sitting last at every call in a \$4,000 claiming event with Shine On Kiev. His first win came in his fourth career drive in a condition-claiming event at Frasier Downs aboard Spartacus Dee J for a purse of \$3,102.

Davis' richest win was a \$194,000 Ontario Sire Stake Final at Mohawk

—MEET THE NEW DIRECTORS—

DR. LAURIE GALLATIN



Dr. Laurie Gallatin was elected to the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association Board of Directors in January and represents breeders.

Gallatin is originally from Cleveland, Ohio and attended The Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute. She received her associates degree and then completed her bachelor's degree at the University of Findlay. Gallatin graduated from Kansas State with her doctorate of veterinary medicine in 2000.

After completing her residency at Purdue University, she began working at The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine as an equine ambulatory clinician.

She started her own practice in 2012, eventually taking over Countryside Veterinary Center in Sunbury in 2014. Gallatin is married and has one son.

"I am all horses all the time," Gallatin said. "Aside from breeding and raising a few standardbred foals each year, my family and I raise and show Clydesdales."

How did you become involved in harness racing?

I started doing reproductive work for Tim and Corrine Lane when I worked at OSU. I also partially owned my first racehorse with Tim.

What are your thoughts on the current state of harness racing?

Since I am more involved on the breeding side of the standardbred industry, I work to help produce the athletes of tomorrow. Some of the smaller breeding operations are downsizing or getting out of the breeding all together.

What can be done to improve harness racing?

I'd like to see more standardbreds have a career after racing such as riding or pleasure driving. I work closely with a local group that starts them under saddle and adopts them out. These are very hardy horses and have been exposed to a lot during their racing career, making them good, solid horses for almost any discipline. People don't recognize the standardbred as such a versatile breed.

How did you become involved with the OHHA?

I became involved with OHHA originally to register my mares for the breeder's awards.

What is your favorite harness racing memory?

I enjoy following the careers of the foals I have worked with.

“I work to help produce the athletes of tomorrow.”

—MEET THE NEW DIRECTORS—

RYAN HOLTON

Ryan Holton was elected to the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association Board of Directors in January and represents trainers and drivers.

Holton and his wife Holly have two children. Holton's son Hunter is a Notre Dame graduate and works in commercial real estate. "He loves the horses and racing. He is getting involved in the business as an owner," Holton said.

His daughter, Hannah graduated from the University of Kentucky with a degree in interior architecture. "She likes the horses when they are turned out at home, but not so much the races." Holton, a history buff and die-hard Cleveland Browns fan, said his daughter did love her "college horse," Hustling Charlie, since he paid for most of her college.

"I enjoy taking care of our place and my favorite thing to do is mow the grass," said Holton, who collects harness racing memorabilia and old signs – anything with advertising on them.

How did you become involved in harness racing?

Like so many others in this business my dad was a trainer-driver. So, I guess you can say I grew up in the business.

What are your thoughts on the current state of harness racing?

I think we are in a good space, especially in Ohio. Many other tracks in the country are doing well also. Wagering is up at several tracks; the stake programs continue to improve; the breeders are doing an excellent job of producing quality racehorses; and the trainers are excited about the horses they are

getting to the races. The owners are showing a lot of excitement. Ohio is rising to the top in all facets of the business. It is a great time to be in harness racing.

What can be done to improve harness racing?

We need 10 more Gabe Prewitts! We need to get more fans to come to the live racing programs and give them a great atmosphere to come with friends, eat good food and wager! We need transparency to the betting public and marketing efforts to ensure the public that racing is fair. We also need to get as many young people involved as possible.

How did you become involved with the OHHA?

My dad was always very involved in the OHHA and before he passed away. He told me that I needed to get involved someday. Jerry Knappenberger, my dad's second trainer was also very involved and became the general manager. I have been a long-time member as I think the organization is very important in Ohio. My wife encouraged me to get on the ballot. She said I would do a good job. I think I might have some good input somewhere along the line!

What is your favorite racing memory?

I would have to say my best memory is racing in the 1998 Little Brown Jug, driving one of my dad's horses, Life Work. It was the first year for the new Jug Barn. The fans coming through the barn and getting to talk to everyone was a blast! I even met the doctor that delivered me. It was a great day and a memory I will have forever.



“I guess you can say I grew up in the business.”

20 questions with Mike Woebkenburg BY ROGER HUSTON

What was your first memory of harness racing?

Being a kid in the late 50s with my dad at old Kentucky Raceway in Florence.

Was your family involved with racing?

I am a third-generation horseman as my grandfather was an owner-trainer and my dad was an owner-trainer-driver.

Do you remember your first drive?

It was at the Warren County Fair in Lebanon, a field of 10, and I finished third.

Where was that very first of 120 lifetime wins at?

It was at the Fayette County Fair in Washington Court House. The race was a dead heat, and I was driving Bay May.

When did you begin your starter's career?

Thirty-two years ago, the opportunity presented itself and allowed me to stay in the industry that I love.

When did you start to make starting gates as a business?

Shortly thereafter, around 1990, I made the first gate and have over the years, made around 50 or so.

What is the most important role of the starter?

To get everybody a fair and equal start.

Do you adjust the speed at the start to fit the horse's class and what if someone is having a problem?

Yes, the speed is to fit the class. My experience is important since it depends on what I can do to help him but not hurt the rest of the field.

Any idea how many races you have started in your career?

I have no idea but in general around 4,000 each year.

What is the most memorable race you have started?

I would say the Little Brown Jug the year Wiggle It Jiggleit won, but all the Jugs are memorable.

What is the fastest you have taken a field away at the start of a race?

It was a Jugette, and it appeared everyone was leaving as we left at 40 mph. They were all glued to the gate.

Is there a standard speed or do you adjust for the class of horse in a particular race?

At one time 11 mph when they approach and 17 mph around the turn and steadily pick up speed to the start. Now, however, the breed is much faster, so the speeds must be adjusted. If the race figures to go in 1:49 they would be all over me, so we must adjust the speed of the gate to fit the race.

I noticed you are going to a number of fair grounds to school young horsies behind the gate?

I love to do that as these babies are the future of our sport. They will be part of my industry for another 12 years.

Why do you follow the horses around the track during a race?

It is two-fold; I give an extra set of eyes for the judges, and if an accident occurs, we are there in seconds and seconds can make a lot of difference.

Were you ever bothered by riding backwards and who controls the speed?

That never bothered me, but some who have rode in the gate had some problems. Once the wings open, my driver (wife Becky) will steer the gate, but I control the speed.

When traveling on the highway who drives?

Becky always drives to the races, and I drive the trip home.



Mike Woebkenburg

Do you have a favorite vacation spot?

Working year round, we don't get many vacations, but we will occasionally go to Florida.

What is your favorite food?

I love seafood especially shrimp and lobster. A good steak as well when I get a chance.

Do you have a favorite movie or TV show?

I am a John Wayne fanatic.

Is there anything on Mike Woebkenburg's bucket list?

There are a few tracks I haven't started at that I would love to get the chance, but I am happy with what I have been fortunate to do in my career.

Be There!

BY ROGER E. HUSTON

Springtime is an exciting time when it comes to harness racing in the Buckeye State. Action begins in the Buckeye Stallion Series and Ohio Sires Stake. Plus, matinee events are scheduled at several county fairgrounds as we prepare for racing at county fairs. It's a chance to get out and about in Buckeye land and enjoy all the happenings.

This is also the time we start to learn more about the two-year-olds in training. In recent weeks, we have had the opportunity to visit trainers across the state and discuss their young horses in training. We've been to the larger stables of Brian Brown, Todd Luther and Virgil Morgan. We've also visited with smaller stables like Jessica Millner, John Ackley and Mark Winters. We will continue to showcase trainers and two-year-olds as part of our "Freshman Focus" series leading up to The Next Generation at Scioto Downs in early July.

We have also brought you matinee racing as these young horses learn the ropes. The start of county fair racing season is just around the corner. You never know what you will learn watching these events. In case you missed it, Ramblin Willie made his first start at the Mercer County Fairgrounds 50 years ago. He finished fifth in 2:23.3. You just never know what little tidbits you will learn.

June will bring us the second leg of Buckeye Stallion Series and Ohio Sires Stake action. In July it is the Next Generation and many two-year-olds will begin action at county fairs and the racetracks across Ohio.

We certainly have a lot to look forward to as we make our way out of this pandemic. Hopefully, the return of fans to the stands at our county fairs will bring a sense of normalcy.

If you cannot make it to a fair near you, be sure to watch the OHHA coverage on our Facebook page. We plan to show more than 125 racing programs from mid-June until the middle of October. In addition to our regular broadcast crew, we plan to have a few special guests help us out this year.

It will be interesting to watch the likes of Heart Of Chewbacca and Charlie May compete on the national scene. In years to come, this will be a common occurrence to watch Ohio bred's compete with the best of the best. The Ohio breeding business is growing by leaps and bounds as it is beginning to have the best program available for racing opportunities with its purse structure and racing opportunities.

Our drivers and trainers are breaking into the top 10 in North America month after month. Aaron Merriman, Ronnie Wrenn Jr., Dan Noble, Brett Miller, Kurt Sugg, Chris Page and Tyler Smith can compete with the best in the sport. Trainers Virgil Morgan Jr., Sam Schillaci, C. Brian Loney, Bill Rhoades along with our female trainers Christi Noble, Jessica Roegner and Jessica Millner are putting up top number's year in and year out here in Ohio.

This spring, during our trips to record "Freshman Focus," I have gotten the chance to do something I have always enjoyed doing, especially from 1984 through 1995, when I had a lot of success driving in the Billings Amateur Trot series. During my visits with Rosy Weaver and Ron Steck, they gave me the opportunity to jog some horses. I don't think I could get into a race bike but hopping into a jog cart is a bit different. I must admit, while I was out on the track, I thought about driving this year in the Billings at Delaware. Ron said that he had one that would be perfect to drive, but when I mentioned the possibility of driving this



year to my daughter Nevele, let's just say, she changed my mind on that subject.

By the way, my record shows I had 19 wins during those years, with some of the drives at county fairs racing against the pros.

Finally, being the brand ambassador (a title I am finally getting used to) for the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association has given me the opportunity to get out and meet people who I have only known by name. Spending 60 years in the announcer's booth, I really didn't get a chance to meet many people in the business. It's nice to put a face with a name or a voice on the phone. I look forward to "meeting" many more of you this summer.

BE THERE!

Freshman Focus



Join Roger Huston every Thursday night at 7PM on the OHHA Facebook Page and YouTube Channel for a look at two-year-olds in training in Ohio

FERRARI AND SHERMAN Picking Up GLADA Wins

The start of the 2021 Great Lakes Amateur Drivers Association season was dominated by Eddie Miller, who won four of the first five GLADA events at MGM Northfield Park. While Miller has continued his winning ways with two wins in May, two other drivers have picked up multiple wins.

Larry Ferrari and Don Sherman have each scored two victories in the last month.



Ferrari found the winner's circle April 24, at Northfield Park with Go Go George in a gate-to-wire effort. Ferrari also was a winner May 8 behind So Wishful.


Ferrari, who is from Macedonia, Ohio, is no stranger when it comes to winning races. In his 26-year career, he has won 359 races in 3,411 starts.



Sherman is no stranger to the winner's circle either. Sherman is just one win behind Ferrari, having won 358 times in 2,672 starts. Sherman also won May 8 at Northfield Park where he guided Palmers Pride to the victory. Sherman's first win of the season came in April behind Heidi's Heart.

Lonnie Graber also picked up a win in the GLADA Series, winning with Time Outta Jail.

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A Huff Of Fresh Air

BY THOM PYE

After a particularly rough winter we can be thankful for the sights and sounds of spring that are in full bloom. Perhaps the best harbinger of warm weather and good times to come is the arrival of the 2021 addition of Huff's Fair Guide that recently arrived in mailboxes. This year Huff's was published by the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association, so I was lucky enough to get an early copy. The photo on the cover brought a smile at the thought of the races and laughter. As I glanced through the pages it was like saying hello to old friends.

The 2021 fair season starts at Paulding County, located in the furthest reaches west in Ohio, where the fans will be welcomed back into the historic 1872 grandstand once again. Paulding is where the two-year-olds start on their path to fame, glory and money. The crowds the owners, trainers, drivers and caretakers are anticipating another good year of the finest of Ohio fair racing.

The season continues in Pickaway County, located just south of Columbus, the following week. That is where Circleville will unveil its newly constructed buildings – although a year later than planned – and then the season and summer heats up when we venture onward to Putnam, Marion and into July with Wilmington.

What started as just an idea at the Delaware qualifiers last May has blossomed into a 125-event production with the OHHA broadcasting all races. The teams will travel throughout Ohio to cover the four fair circuits in the Buckeye State: Ohio Fair Racing Conference, Home Talent Colt Stakes, Ohio Colt Racing Association and the Southern Valley Colt Circuit.

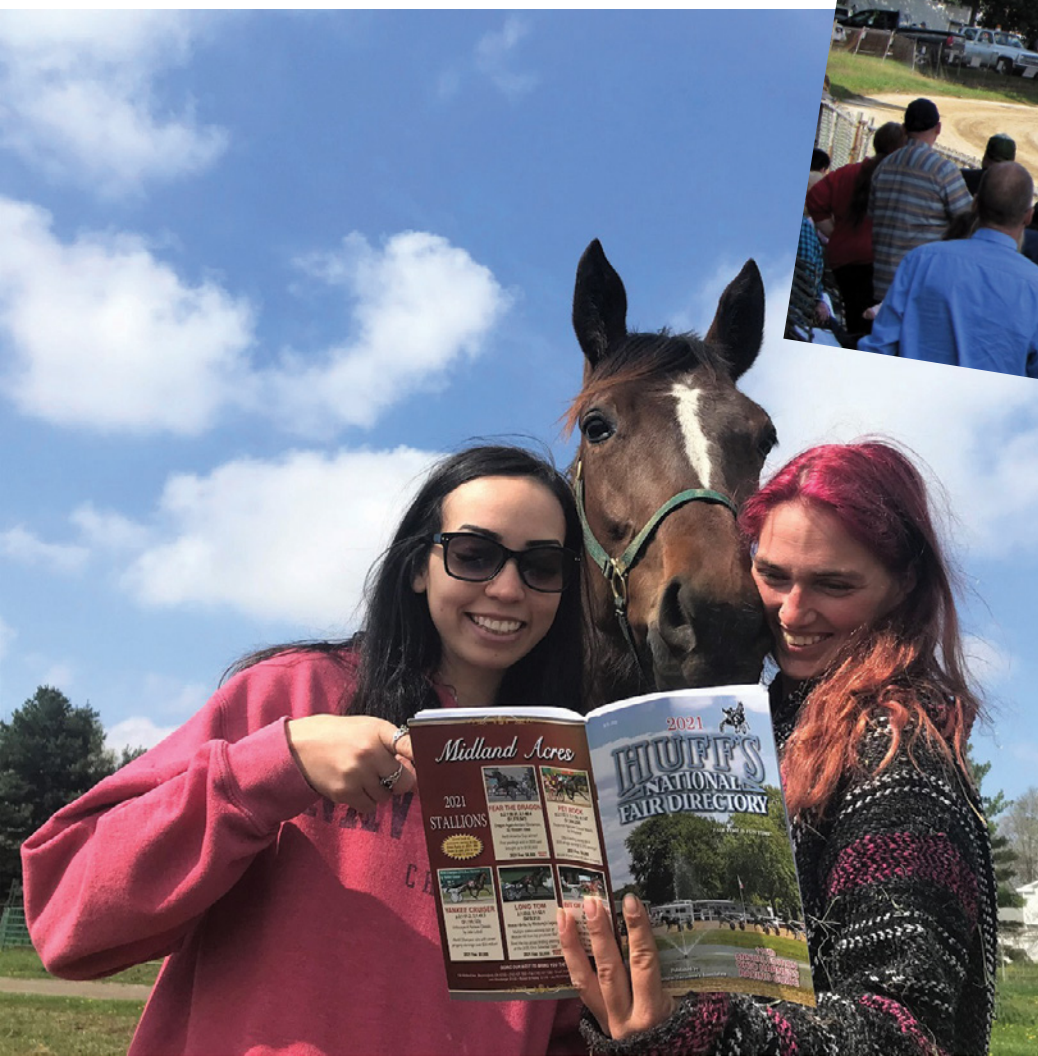
In total, the broadcast teams head out to a total of 65 fairs this year. At one point in August, it will be four different fairs racing on the same day, but thanks to the OHHA YouTube and Facebook channels, you'll be able to watch your favorite horses and enjoy the sights and sounds of beautiful Ohio from the comfort of your computer, tablet or mobile device.

And while the OHHA will post all the fair schedules, it's best to grab a Huff's guide so you can follow who is where so you can plan your summer. By the time the season wraps up in Lancaster at Fairfield County and the 2021 Fair Finals go behind the gate at Dayton, your Huff's will be well read, well worn and well enjoyed.



Soon the voices of Doug, Ayres, Chris, Bill and Roger will be heard above the roar of the crowd "as they turn for home!"

On a picture-perfect Sunday at Delaware Fairgrounds Allyssa and Ali are joined by Auntie Belle M to check out the 2021 Huff's Fair Guide.



OHHA Participates in **HOCKING COUNTY AG DAYS**

For the first time since the onset of COVID-19, the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association was on location with participants.

The OHHA attended the Hocking County Ag Days May 15-16 at the Hocking County Fairgrounds in Logan, Ohio. The family friendly event celebrates agriculture and the community. Attendees experience agriculture, history and the environment through interactive demonstrations and displays.

“Ag Days brings together the community and connects us in a meaningful way, said Betty Shaw, chair of the Ag Days committee. “Local businesses sponsor the event and donate funds, while organizations provide education and activities.

Ag Days is special because the community comes together to make it happen.”

The OHHA display included a race bike with a virtual reality headset giving people the opportunity to see what it is like to sit behind a horse during a race. The display also included a leg wrapping station and “Bone Box” with replica horse bones so children could compare the horse bones to theirs.

“Ag Days has something for everyone to enjoy,” said Ivory Harlow, the organization director for the Hocking County Farm Bureau.





PAULDING FAIR First to Open



After a year without county fairs because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Paulding County is preparing to kick off the 2021 Ohio fair season June 12.

Fair board president Dan Howell said he knows all eyes are on Paulding County.

“We are very excited and working very hard to get everything completed and ready to go,” said Howell, who knows people

will be watching. “Many different fairs have reached out and asked us what we are doing to prepare. Everybody is looking and making sure we do everything safely and as smoothly as possible.”

He said they have been notified that there is a good chance the governor and other officials will be visiting the fair.

The fair staff has worked harder than normal according to Howell. He said he took the directive that they would have a full fair because it would be easier to scale back at the last minute than trying to pull things together.

“We booked our entertainment and had it in place because it would be easier to cancel the contracts,” he said.

As they were preparing, Howell said they followed the guidelines set by the state.

“We worked with the state guidelines regarding social distancing and spacing,” Howell said. “There will be plenty of hand sanitizer all over the fair ground and posted signs for social distancing.”

When the state announced they were lifting the COVID-19 health orders, plans changed.

“We are going ahead as to the orders,” Howell said. “We are still fine-tuning certain areas. There will be hand washing stations and as far as cleaning areas, we will still be following COVID protocols.”

Howell said the biggest change will be in the grandstand. Originally, the fair board planned for 30 percent capacity.

“We had to mark off some seating areas not to be used to maintain distancing,” Howell said.

When the orders were lifted, the decision was made to open the grandstand. “The grandstand will be open to full capacity for every show, and we are sanitizing after every show.”

Those shows include harness racing, a demolition derby, truck and track pull and a charity rodeo with the proceed going to fight childhood cancer.

Howell said it feels good to be getting back to normal.

“It feels good for the kids. Everything our board does is for the kids,” Howell said. “We made several attempts last year to do things for the kids, but every time we had a date, there was a COVID-19 spike.”

This year, fair officials added an extra day before the fair officially starts with activities for the kids. The activities include a kickball tournament in memory of past president Lonnie Miller.

In addition to an extra day, fairgoers will see several improvements to the fairgrounds. Howell said they used the time to do a lot of upgrades including renovating the grandstand.



“We replaced timbers that were showing signs of wear, put in new composite flooring and steel siding. We also rewired the entire grandstand,” Howell said, admitting there are a few smaller projects that need to be completed.

Howell is excited for the fair.

“The community was disheartened when we didn’t have a fair last year,” he said. “I think we’ll have a bigger crowd this year. Everybody can’t wait to get out.”

“The grandstand will be open to full capacity for every show, and we are sanitizing after every show.”

OUTSTANDING GROOMS BY ASHLEY DAILEY

The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association would like to congratulate our outstanding groomers **Taylor Russell and Daneta Wood.**



Taylor Russell

Russell has been involved in some facet of the horse industry her entire life. As a native of Urbana, Ohio, she has been grooming at the Champaign County Fairgrounds since she was 20 years old.

Russell said her favorite part is going to the races because "it's where you see all your time and effort pay off."

Chad Foulk, who Russell has been working for the last two years, likes her dependability. She is taking care of five or more horses year-round and paddocking at each of the Ohio tracks. She even owns her own Standardbred, Some Vintage Beach.



Daneta Wood

Wood fell into harness racing by chance but has since planted roots in the industry. She has been a groom on the Brian Georges' team for more than two years.

Wood goes beyond what is required because it's more than just work to her. "At the end of the day she attends to each one of her horses' needs," Georges said.

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TOP OHIO DRIVERS AND TRAINERS

NATIONAL RANKINGS THROUGH APRIL 2021

Drivers - Wins

| | | | |
|------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|
| 1 Aaron Merriman | 220 | 4 Ronnie Wrenn Jr | 171 |
| 2 Trace Tetrick | 185 | 6 Dan Noble | 156 |
| 3 Tony Hall | 176 | 7 Brett Miller | 146 |

Trainers - Win

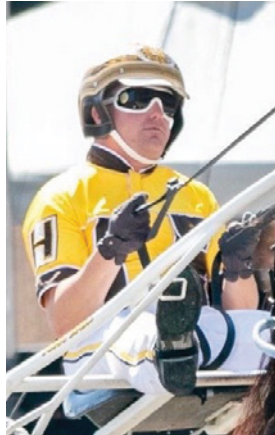
| | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1 Ron Burke | 244 |
| 5 Sam Schillaci | 61 |
| 6 C. Brian Loney | 58 |
| 8 Brian George | 53 |



Aaron Merriman



Trace Tetrick



Tony Hall



Ron Burke



Sam Schillaci

OHHA SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association will again be offering scholarship opportunities to OHHA members and their families.

Scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors and students enrolled in degree or certificate programs. Graduate students are not eligible unless they are enrolled in a harness racing-specific graduate or professional level program and provide complete details regarding the harness racing-specific graduate or professional level program in conjunction with their application.

Completed applications are due July 1, 2021.

Application and requirements are available at: OHHA.com

OHHA Board Directive April 22, 2021

The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association Board of Directors has clarified the OHHA sulky program rules. Note that the program is under review by the Board and will likely have additional changes made soon.

The owner of a sulky must register the sulky prior to an accident for coverage to apply. The sulky registration must be complete, which includes the sulky's serial number, proof of purchase, and payment proof. If the registration information supplied is not complete the registration will not be accepted. Sulky Registration forms are available at the OHHA website with complete instructions, www.ohha.com/insurance If the sulky is not listed on the OHHA registry prior to an accident, a sulky claim will not be accepted.

If you have any questions regarding this directive, please contact the OHHA office at 614-221-3650.

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OHIO BREEDERS AWARD REQUIREMENTS

Mares registered in 2016 (Foals of 2017)

mare registration date 12/31/16

| Foal Age | Membership Requirement |
|---------------------------|---|
| Bred 2016 | Grace Period, No Membership Required |
| Foal Born 2017 | No Membership Required |
| Yearling 2018 | No Membership Required |
| 2 & 3-Year-Old 2019, 2020 | Membership Required |

Mares registered in 2017 (Foals of 2018)

mare registration date 12/31/17

| Foal Age | Membership Requirement |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Bred 2017 | Membership Required |
| Foal Born 2018 | Membership Required |
| Yearling 2019 | No Membership Required |
| 2 & 3-Year-Old 2020, 2021 | Membership Required |

Mares registered in 2018 (Foals of 2019)

mare registration date 11/30/18

| Foal Age | Membership Requirement |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Bred 2018 | No Membership Required |
| Foal Born 2019 | Membership Required |
| Yearling 2020 | No Membership Required |
| 2 & 3-Year-Old 2021, 2022 | No Membership Required |

Mares registered in 2019 (Foals of 2020)

mare registration date 11/30/19

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

Mares registered in 2020 (Foals of 2021)

mare registration date 11/30/20

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

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

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

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

Regularly Scheduled Meeting Recap

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 *By Renée Mancino*

Roll Call, all Commissioners Present.

In normal business for the Commission, Executive Director William Crawford's Report and Approval items were introduced, and the March 24, 2021, minutes were offered for ratification. There were no documents related to the Executive Director's approvals disclosed or provided to those in attendance. The discussion regarding specific submissions concerned ordinary course business of race date changes, make-up dates, host-guest changes, and un-coupling requests for wagering purposes. The Racing Commission unanimously ratified the Executive Director's Approval items and the March 24, 2021, Meeting Minutes.

The Executive Director's report items included normal and customary items that included, uncoupling requests, fine account approvals, host-guest changes and approval of racing officials. No documents were provided to those in attendance. The Racing Commission unanimously ratified all requests.

Consideration to approve Resolution 2021-04, the April distribution of casino tax revenue of \$2,105,565.98 for the 2021 first quarter. The Resolution distributed the amount to the Emergency Fund established by Resolution 2020-09 on April 22, 2020. Funds not needed from the Emergency Fund will be reallocated to the Commission's tax revenue fund for future distribution by the Commission. The distribution will be provided before the May Racing Commission meeting for input and discussion.

Consideration and review of the protocols for the safe return to racing starting June 19, 2020. The Chairman provided commentary that amendments to the protocol would be released effective April 23, 2021. Changes include all licensees being permitted on the backstretch and paddock subject to protocols in place. Changes to jockey quarantining procedures, dorm room protocols (which could follow campgrounds protocols), with

no changes at this time due to a licensee being vaccinated. Commissioner Winters discussed monitoring other state protocols on requiring the vaccine in order to opt-out of protocols. The Racing Commission unanimously approved providing Executive Director William Crawford the authority to approve as an Executive Director's item after circulating and receiving approval from the Commissioners on the amendments.

A recap on the horse racing fatalities was provided by Racing Commission Consulting Veterinarian, Dr. James Robertson. It was noted that the numbers reported since 2009 are for training and racing related catastrophic breakdowns, analogous to the Jockey Club's reporting requirements for sudden deaths that occur during training, racing, or 72 hours after a race. From the March report, catastrophic losses included six thoroughbreds and one standardbred. Year-to-date 2021 catastrophic losses are fifteen thoroughbred fatalities and three Standardbred fatalities.

There was no discussion on Belterra Park's extension for closing on the real estate sale for Boyd Gaming and Gaming and Leisure Properties (GLPI).

The monthly commission financial report was provided by Fiscal Officer Sherry White. March revenue had a slight gain. Expenses were down 9%, which beat projected expenses by 4%, with a \$248,000 projected savings on expenses for the fiscal year. Fiscal year-over-year revenue was down 11% without the Casino Commission deposits of approximately \$306,000 for the Racing Commission's operations. If the Casino Commission deposit was made the revenue would be \$170,000 ahead of prior years. Fiscal year revenue is down 18%. Pari-mutuel tax is down, fine money is up, and Cares Act funding was received. The Racing Commission's Operating Fund has approximately \$2,100,000 and continues to hold steady.

Commissioner Hansen provided a Medication and Testing Committee update. The Horse Racing Integrity and Safety Act continues to be the primary topic of consideration. The Committee Members have been participating in the Association of Racing Commissioner's International's meetings. Commissioner Hansen also discussed the possibility of bifurcating the discussions for thoroughbred and standardbred medication and testing and would like to meet more frequently.

Commissioner Simpson Chairman of the Safety Committee discussed safety helmets and vests as a discussion topic. Commissioner Simpson discussed thoroughbred gate loading in the United Kingdom, which was done with no gate handlers.

In Chairman's Comments, Chairman Borgemenke discussed classified, non-classified, and union workers with the Racing Commission. Classified employees received a 3% raise, which was automatically extended to all employees. After motion and vote, the Racing Commission unanimously ratified the employee compensation increase. The Chairman also discussed a resumption of in-person Racing Commission meetings when the State Employees were back in person at work. Also provided was an update to the condition of two jockeys involved in a spill at Mahoning Valley, one jockey had minor injuries and was not hospitalized. The second jockey had a broken nose, facial bones, and other injuries that necessitated hospital admission, his return will be at least 6-8 weeks out.

No Executive Session was necessary, so the motion and vote were taken to adjourn and conclude the meeting.

For a transcript of the meeting contact the Ohio State Racing Commission. The next scheduled Racing Commission meeting date is May 26, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. The Agenda and Meeting Information can be found at the Ohio State Racing Commission's website at, <http://www.racingohio.net>.

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