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Fantastic 2012

Big Bad John Rolls in Florida

By Lucas Marquardt

Little Brown Jug winner **Big Bad John** (Western Hanover) never had an anxious moment in his return to the races at Pompano Park last night as he cruised to an easy win in the \$12,000 Open Handicap in track record time.



Big Bad John moved closer to the \$1 million mark last night (Skip Smith photo)

With the win he pocketed \$6,000 for owner Ed Telle, increasing his career total to \$994,559. With another win against similar company next week he will go over the \$1 million mark, a goal Telle set when deciding to race the horse a couple of times before sending him to stud in Ohio.

His final time was 1:51.1 and he paid \$2.40.

When Telle decided to bring the colt back, he turned him over to the Hennessy Brothers, trainer Dan and driver Wally. After two Pompano qualifiers they clearly had the Jug winner ready to go. Leaving from the seven post, he went right to the front and was unchallenged before opening up by five lengths on the final turn. He was under wraps crossing the wire while his winning margin diminished a bit to 1 ½ lengths.

"He raced incredible when you think about how long he was off," Dan Hennessy said. "Even though we had a nice 52 mile qualifier, that's still not the same as a race and then he had another two-week break after that. I would have liked to see him race last week. You never know how a 3-year-old is going to perform against aged horse. That was the big question for this evening."

Hennessy was put in an unusual situation, getting to train a Little Brown Jug winner after someone else (Ron Potter) did most of the hard work. Though Big Bad John was 1-5, Hennessy admitted he was nervous up about the race.

"It was very exciting," he said. "I'm not going to say I wasn't nervous. I couldn't even take a nap this afternoon. There was a lot of excitement and I really enjoyed this. You just don't get a chance to do this very often with a horse of this caliber."

"He looked like he might have slowed up a bit in the final 20 yards or so but that was only because he hadn't raced in so long," Telle said. "Hopefully, he'll get one more start here in Florida and get to \$1 million in career earnings before we ship him off to his stallion career at Midland Acres in Ohio. He danced all the big dances and he won his starts for us late in the year at The Red Mile and I couldn't be any prouder of what he's done."

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5, PPK, \$12,000, Pace, OPEN HANDICAP Post Position 1 Assigned, 2-7 Drawn, M, 27.0, 55.3, 1:22.4, 1:51.1, FT **Big Bad John (c, 3, Western Hanover--Trulywork Of Art, by Artsplace)**, \$130,000 2009 LEX-SEL O-Winchester Baye Acres Inc. B-Kentuckiana Farms Gen Par. T-Dan Hennessy. D-Wally Hennessy, \$6,000, Lifetime Record: 26-18-2-2, \$994,559

Noble Wins Pair at Pompano to End Stellar Year

By Lucas Marquardt

Dan Noble's trip to Pompano Park turned out to be a winning one. Trying to pile up as many wins as possible before the year was out, Noble made a rare trip to Pompano last night and came away with two wins.

That gave him 773 wins on the year from 2,792 drives and top spot in the 2011 drivers' standings.

George Brennan, whose not to drive over the holidays finished second with 754 victories. Tim Tetrick took down the third spot with 746 winners.

"This is the first time I've ever driven at Pompano and it's great to experience the Florida warmth and speeds they go here for myself," Noble said. "It was a long year for sure to pursue this title and I'm really glad I did it, with so much travel from Northfield Park to Scioto Downs to the Red Mile. The top memory I have of the whole year, which seemed like a bit of blur at times, was driving at The Red Mile during Grand Circuit Week. But, I'm ready to go again for 2012. Definitely, I'm going to try and do this again in the New Year even if it means living so much on the road and out of my truck for another year."

Final 2011 Driver Standings (By Wins)

--stats courtesy of USTA

Name	Starts	Wins	Earnings
Dan Noble	2792	773	\$2,329,617
George Brennan	2725	754	\$14,534,522
Tim Tetrick	3362	746	\$15,850,537
Dave Palone	2663	698	\$10,485,209
George Napolitano Jr.	2579	540	\$6,995,870
Scott Zeron	3007	537	\$8,251,926

Final 2011 Trainer Standings (By Wins)

Name	Starts	Wins	Earnings
Ron Burke	3786	797	\$18,533,503
Lou Pena	1708	513	\$7,120,984
Rene Allard	1370	343	\$3,293,816
Mark Ford	2089	297	\$6,037,062
Erv Miller	1098	267	\$5,536,958



Dan Noble led all drivers in 2011 with 773 wins

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Trainer _____ Telephone No. _____

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A "Best of" List That's a Little Different

By Dean Towers



We've come to the end of the year, so I thought I'd look back and hand out some hardware (and at the same time have a little fun regarding racing in 2011).

Here we go:

Race of the Year: One race that did stand out for me in 2011 was the Breeders Crown Open Trot. The Toronto live crowd was cheering for local hero San Pail, but the two European trotters, Rapide Lebel and Commander Crowe, came to play. I loved the way

Rapide Lebel dug in right until the

end, and it was one of those races that was talked about on chat boards, on Twitter, and in grandstands everywhere. In the end San Pail was victorious, but like any good race, the fans were left wondering what might have been if the trips were reversed and were asking for a rematch.

Top Performance by a Racehorse: This was a difficult category. I was at the Fan Hanover elimination when See You At Peelers was stung in a :26.2 second quarter, ran in and still won under a stranglehold in 1:50. I also marveled at Drop the Ball's sensational Breeders Crown elimination win, where I'm pretty sure she could've went five lengths faster and demolished the world record. The horse I will go with, though, is Sweet Lou in the Breeders Crown final for two-year-old pacing colts. He was absolutely jaw-dropping.

We Should Probably Stop Yelling at Him in 2012:

What do harness racing fans like to do more: win a bet, or slag a harness racing executive? Answer: It's a tie. One that doesn't deserve our ire is United States Trotting Association Executive Vice President Mike Tanner. He works hard in a near impossible-to-change business.

Quote of the Year: I have no idea, but I'm 90 percent sure it came during a Ron Pierce interview.

"Whoops" of the Year: Drivers George Brennan, Yannick Gingras, David Miller, Tim Tetrick and trainers Jimmy Takter and Trond Smedshammer for missing their Breeders Crown engagements.

We Don't Mind Missed Engagements Award for 2011: Ron Pierce and Luc Ouellette. They picked up drives on two layovers Crown night, Check Me Out and Anndrovette, and pocketed a quick \$30 large for making a couple of left turns.

Interview Question of the Year: Bob "Hollywood" Heyden would not gloss over the Crys Dream situation on Hambletonian Oaks elimination night and met it head-on by asking the filly's owner, "This filly was off 42 days before this race, can you tell us what happened?" Of course everyone knew what happened but he wanted to ask one of the

people who initiated it. Good for Bob. It's a social media world and pretending something didn't happen doesn't cut it anymore.

Drive of the Year: Jack Moiseyev in the Confederation Cup Final with Bestofbest Hanover. Many times our stakes races are won by pure power and all a driver has to do is point a horse to the front. This wasn't one of those. The move to the inside by Jack near the three quarter pole was taking a chance, but he played the percentages and won. The colt would've never got the job done any other way.

Training Job of the Year: It was difficult for me to separate Linda Toscano with Chapter Seven and Ed Hart with Roll With Joe, so I have to call it a tie. Roll With Joe never looked like a pure superstar, but there he was week in and week out pacing fast and winning races. If Chapter Seven was in a lot of other barns I put his fair odds at winning the Breeders Crown about equal to me dating Jessica Alba. These were two fantastic training jobs by two great trainers.



Jessica Alba and Dean Towers are definitely not dating

The Ubiquitous Promoter

Award: For 2011 this goes to Tioga's Nick Salvi. It's unlikely a day goes by without a press release from him in my inbox about something harness racing related.

Marketer of the Year: When Greg Blanchard was hired by Western Fair last year, the words "great hire" were heard over and over again. It was. He has promoted their two signature races with verve; he helped get the tracks' signal on TVG, does YouTube videos on handicapping and much, much more. I have a feeling we're all going to get to know Western Fair a lot better in 2012. Well done Greg!

"The You Warned Me Award": This goes to Sam McKee on Hambletonian day. Canadian harness racing fans know that giving driver Randy Waples a microphone is dangerous. He's a chatterbox.

2011 Iron Horse: My first job out of school was in investor relations and my boss was a tough-as-nails World War II vet. One day when things were going poorly in our industry I asked him if he ever saw it this bad. He answered, "Yes, in a foxhole in Italy."

If I'm ever in a foxhole in Italy and I need a horse beside me, I'd want it to be Foiled Again.

Harness Racing Twitter Handle Tagline of the Year: Trainer Blair Burgess's Twitter profile says the following, "Father/husband/horse trainer/horse breeder who tends to piss people off because he gets way too opinionated sometimes." Blair is @desibesi on Twitter.

Hardest Worker to Up the Bet in 2011: Michael Antoniades of Balmoral Park wins this one by a sixteenth of a mile. Their pick 4 pools have gone up about 600
(continued page 3)

percent since 2009, and it's not only the low takeout that's doing it. Michael is constantly on e-mail letting people know what's happening, offering out handicapping tips and asking for press. Give the man a raise!

Innovation that Caught on in 2011: The UFO racebike. Each time I hear about the bikes, the words "on back order" are part of the conversation.

Fake-out of the Year: Two words - "New Jersey". The headlines one day were completely turned on their head the next day; and the next and the next. It was like a scene from the Bill Murray film Groundhog Day.

Horse of the Year: My prediction is San Pail and I think it'll be a landslide.

Have a very Happy New Year everyone!

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I realize that San Pail is the prohibitive favorite to win HOY honors in both U.S. and Canadian balloting, but it seems that we've gotten carried away here. Fourteen percent of those who voted in a Standardbred Canada poll designated San Pail as the best trotter of all time. He came second only to the great Moni Maker in the final tally. And that poll included preeminent colts and fillies that didn't race past three.

Are we suffering from collective amnesia? Are the more than 500 people who voted San Pail number one in that poll new to the sport, or simply fans with a dry sense of humor? He doesn't even deserve to be HOY. That honor should go to the brilliant trotting filly, Check Me Out, who earned \$900,000 winning 14 of 16 starts, and finished second in the other two. She took the Breeders Crown, Bluegrass, Merrie Annabelle, Reynolds, Tompkins Geers, International Stallion Stake and the Matron. She won the latter after breaking stride and coming to a dead stop 24 lengths behind the trailing filly.

When it comes to two-year-old trotting fillies, one would have to put Check Me Out in the conversation with Armbro Flight, Continentalvictory, Kerry Way, Starlark Hanover, Peace Corps, Colonial Charm, Snow White and Impish. In other words, she is competitive with the best two-year-old fillies of all time. Trainer Ray Schnittker puts her in the same sentence with Dewey at this point in her development.

On the other hand, prior to 2011, San Pail won the Maple Leaf twice and...and...and...During the last three years he

has raced in 39 of those ticky-tacky opens on the WEG circuit against overmatched preferred stock. Of the 21 opens he "competed" in over the last two years, he was the odds on favorite in 20 of them and won 17. Setting aside the aged trotting mares that were better than he is for a single year or a career-the likes of Fresh Yankee, Moni Maker, Peace Corps, Une de Mai, Roquepine, Armbro Flight, Delmonica Hanover, Grades Singing and Classical Way, there are scores of aged male trotters who were better than San Pail, for a year and a career. And when they weren't racing on the stakes circuit, they were competing against the best in training in legitimate FFA races.

In 1981 Ideal Du Gazeau, a two-time winner of the Elitlopp and three time winner of the Roosevelt International, won the International, the Prix d'Amerique, the Italian Grand prix Delle Nazioni, the Challenge Cup, the Finlandia AJO, the Grand Criterium de Vitesse, the Prix de L'Atlantique and a half dozen other European stakes.

In 1959 Jamin won the Prix de France, Roosevelt International, American Trotting Championship, Prix de Amerique and the Elitlopp. He also went faster than any European horse had ever gone, in a time trial at Springfield, Ill., wearing big earmuffs, no less.

In 1988 Mack Lobell won the, Elitlopp, Breeders Crown, Statue of Liberty, Challenge Cup, Nat Ray and the Van Lennep Invitational. He also set a track record for the mile and a quarter International, which was held at Yonkers that year.

In 1960 Hairos II won the mile and a quarter Roosevelt International, lugging a 260 pound driver, and trotting every step on the outside. He also won the Challenge Cup, the Prix d'Amerique and eight other European stakes.

In 1972 Speedy Crown won the American Trotting Championship, Roosevelt International, Realization, Maple Leaf, Dygert and took the record \$100,000 winner's share home after an easy victory over Une de Mai and Fresh Yankee in the Challenge Cup.

In 1984 Lutin d'Isigny won his first of two Roosevelt Internationals, the Challenge Cup, Prix de Paris, Copenhagen Cup and the Prix Rene Balliere.

In 1970 Dayan won the American Trotting Championship, Gotham, Hambletonion Maturity, Dygert, Pacific Trot and the Marquis De Lafayette. In the American Classic at Hollywood Park, he beat Fresh Yankee for the second time in two weeks, equaling the world record for a mile and an eighth.

In 1964 Speedy Scot won the Roosevelt International, American Trotting Championship, Realization, American National, and the HTA Trot. Also, in his first start against older horses, he trounced the great Duke Rodney in the Titan Cup.

You can do the same thing with Su Mac Lad, Savoir, Dartmouth, Noble Victory, Carlisle, Scott Frost, Duke Rodney and others. So while Check Me out is in the conversation with the best ever in her division, San Pail is not. (Continued page 4)

With wins in the Breeders Crown, Allerage, Credit Winner, Nat Ray and Maple Leaf, he's obviously the aged trotter of 2011, but beating up on the cripples, has beens, and simply unqualified bunch that comprise the 2011 aged trotting division, as well as the less than impressive assortment that fill those opens at Mohawk and Woodbine, certainly doesn't expunge San Pail's historical insignificance, nor should it qualify him for HOY honors.
Joe FitzGerald

I am a long time harness follower, since the first time I saw harness racing in 1963 at Washington Park. I've seen harness racing decline over the last 48 years and I think the number one reason is that the fans are not number one.

I give you one example: The horses are the stars but the drivers should also be the stars. Tony Morgan is number 4 all time in drivers wins and 10 in money won and was the number 1 driver in North America in 2008 with 959 wins and 4526 drives. Yet, he no longer gets drives from all the top trainers. In 2011, he has 265 wins from only 2314 drives. Mostly on drives with no chance from obscure trainers.

Something similar is going on with Stephane Bouchard at Yonkers. Both look like they have been blacked balled. You cannot get any information on why drivers like that get buried and you don't see a word on any harness website.

Also stats on the top drivers are hard to get. You have to pay \$0.75 to Pathway to find out how many career wins a driver has.

Can you imagine MLB or NFL charging money to find out who are the top HR hitters all time or most TD in a lifetime.
Raulin Angulo

With the coming New Year, I believe harness racing should make integrity its #1 priority!

Thank goodness that Jeff Gural is making a strong attempt to keep this type OUT of The Meadowlands. There should be more track owners willing to stand up and do this in the name of what is best for the sport (and the horses themselves)!! If WE (the sport as a whole) don't protect the horses and the betting public from these people, who will?

It is so very discouraging to those of us that work hard, play by the rules, treat our horses kindly (and with respect) and attempt to make a living from racing, when we are forced to compete against those with the "chemistry sets." It is a losing battle sadly, and will ultimately, I'm afraid, result in the honest horsemen and women getting out of the business that they have devoted their lives too for so many years, merely because they simply cannot compete against the bad guys.
Kim E. Myers

They need to also ban the owners associated with cheating, drug trainers if they ever want to really create a level playing field. Wake up racing world, it's supposed to be a new era at the Meadowlands!
Frank Baldachino

As far as Jeff Gural goes, it's about time someone in this

sport has a set of balls. Why do hard working horseman get screwed by these low down people? I hope some other tracks take this and run with it.
Michael Novosel

I think the integrity of the game is everything and Jeff Gural should be a honored by all in the industry. Furthermore, I understand the legal liability of explaining the reasons for exclusion however the betting public and all associated with the game as owners, trainers, etc. should have a general idea of the criteria of acceptance and exclusion.
Max Wernick

I have mixed emotions over the banning of Lou Pena at the Meadowlands.

First off, I believe he is using something that is untraceable by the current drug tests. Much in the way Oscar Barrera was making a mockery of the NYRA Circuit back in the 80's...but eventually they were able to figure out what he was doing. Pena will have his day of reckoning...just a matter of time. He was a small fish in a small pond at CalExpo and now is suddenly unbeatable in the NY/NJ/Pa circuit? Innocent people don't get banned and not scream from the rooftops. He was banned from Yonkers and never said a word.

Second, I realize Jeff Gural is running the Meadowlands, but without sufficient evidence against Pena, should he be able to ban him? I realize technically he can, but is this what we want our sport to become? Each track will have its own determination on rulings?

Situations like this are a strong reason having a commissioner is so needed. If Lou Pena is guilty of doping horses, then he should be barred from every track and not just the Big M. But without having someone in power, we are forcing each track to make its own rulings.

I believe Gural is probably the most important person in the sport today, I would like to see him push for a Harness Racing Commissioner.
Vito Casucci

Just finished your article in the Dec. 31st edition on Walter Case Jr. Hard to believe that harness racing in the State of New Jersey will sink so low as to issue a driver's license to this individual. Convicted and served time for attempted murder, and perhaps just as bad (for horses in his care) he has an acknowledged problem of abusing his charges by kicking them. If it wasn't pitiful, it would be laughable that he now agrees to drive a specially constructed race bike that will prohibit him from reaching through and kicking his charges. What about when the horses get back to the barn where no one can see? This is a man with an anger problem. Let him take it somewhere else.
Gary Kay, Esq
Editor's Note: Case was convicted of aggravated assault and not attempted murder.

I applaud Jeff Gural for giving Case a chance if he gets licensed (no reason why he should not). Also, accolades to HRU for supporting his reinstatement. Bottom line, while he is far from perfect morally and is not going to be an "ambassador" like John Campbell, but he is not "dirty" and that is the main thing which should count.

In addition, I was not surprised at one of the previous HRUs where it was stated that Brian Sears will probably going over to Yonkers. I was reminded of an advertisement in HRU that Mr. Gural took out listing "Friends of the Meadowlands". Sears was on there. He states he needs the \$\$\$\$\$. Let's see, he wins about \$15 million in purses and gets 5% = (750 K). That's not bad while driving at Meadowlands. I guess that's not enough. I could go on longer about this but I would just ask Mr. Gural to remember the people who stood by him and the Meadowlands in the dark hours. John Christiansen

What I Would Like to See in 2012

1. A Fair Start Rule in New Jersey (at least), if not the entire country.
2. Replace race numbers with post times and stick to them as off times.
3. If we are going to stick to race numbers, make post time mean something accurate.
4. More harness racing on TVG besides Monday and Tuesday evening. Live would be even better.
5. A racetrack profitable without slots.
6. Horsemen acting like they realize slots will not always be there and act like they care.
7. The development of America One, a simulcast channel which will show harness racing from 10:00am to 12:00am showing races from different tracks lined up, so there will be a different track every three hours.
8. Expansion of the Strategic Wagering Initiative to include wagers that some of the smaller players may play like Daily Doubles, Exactas and Trifectas,
9. Racetracks who are lowering their takeout on Pick-4s and Superfectas to start lowering their takeout on win, place, and show wagers. After all, does it cost more to process those wagers?
10. Closing the wagering windows when the starter calls the field. The whales will learn when wagering will end and learn to adjust (yeah, I know the chances of it happening, but you can wish).

Allan Schott

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Driver Trace Tetrick



HRU: What do you expect from the racing in the Midwest in 2012?

TT: Well, I live in Illinois, but for the past couple of years I have been racing in Indiana and have really done well there. Things in Illinois could be making a turn for the better and I hope things go well there. For now I'm planning of spending most of my time in Indiana for this upcoming year.

HRU: Is it hard having a brother who is the leading driver in the county?

TT: Actually, I think that it's a good thing. There isn't any competition between us or anything like that. I think we just feed off each other and want each other to do well. We support one another throughout the year. It's not like I want to win because my brother wins, I just want to win. So, I think it's a good thing.

HRU: Your brother moved to the East and enjoyed enormous success, do you plan on doing the same?

TT: Yes, absolutely. Like I said earlier, I have really enjoyed racing in Indiana and it has been very good to me. But for now I just want to keep on getting better and eventually move to the bigger tracks out East.

HRU: What goals have you set for yourself for 2012 and beyond?

TT: That's tough. There's not one thing that I have written down saying this is what I want to do. I just want to stay competitive and keep getting better. As long as I do that, no matter where I'm racing, things should be good. For now I just take it one day at a time, and hope to keep getting better while staying sharp and competitive.

Woodbine Report

8 Wdb. \$38,000, Pace. Preferred. 27, 55.4, 1:24.4, 1:39, 1:53.2 SY

Sparky Mark (h,4 -

Astros-Luckbealadytonite-Camluck)

O & B-Leo J Thibodeau T-Mark Austin. D-Sylvain Filion, \$19,000. Lifetime Record: 38-20-3-4, \$331,590.

To view replay click [here](#)

9 Wdb. \$27,000, Pace. NW 3 RACES OR \$100,000 LIFE-TIME. 27, 56.1, 1:24.2, 1:38.2, 1:53.3 SY

Lonesome Attack (g,3 - On The Attack-Lady Lonesome-Nobleland Sam) O-Gerrie S Tucker, Ciro B Gentile, Debbie M Bird B-Sam Noble. T-Jason Robinson. D-Jody Jamieson, \$13,500. Lifetime Record: 25-10-7-3, \$88,258 To view replay click [here](#)

The Dynamic Duo, Jamieson and Gillis, Take 2011 WEG Titles

By Ashley Mayotte

TORONTO - As the 2011 standardbred racing season came to a close on Saturday afternoon at Woodbine, driver Jody Jamieson and trainer Jeff Gillis proved once again they are a force to be reckoned with.



Jody Jamieson's biggest win in 2011 came with Up The Credit in the North America Cup (New Image Media photo)

also banked \$9,041,370 million in purse earnings, the most he has ever earned racing on the WEG circuit.

Sylvain Filion finished second with 234 wins in 1,667 starts and \$5,255,197 million in earnings.

The 94 win difference between Jamieson and Filion is the largest margin of victory since 2002 when Chris Christoforou took the top spot, winning 105 more dashes than runner-up Paul MacDonell.

Jamieson, who has been nominated for a 2011 O'Brien Award in the Driver of the Year category, found the winner's circle in 29 of WEG's stakes events in 2011, including two Breeders Crowns, two OSS Super Finals and the Milton Stakes.

But he says nothing compares to winning the \$1.5 million Pepsi North America Cup at Mohawk with Up The Credit, one of his father, Carl's trainees. It's a victory that Jamieson will treasure.

"I won the Ontario Regional Driving Championship, I won the National Driving Championship and I won the World Driving Championship," said the 35-year-old Moffat resident. "Not that those don't rank way up there on my list, but winning the North America Cup for my dad is the highlight of my career, not just my year."

Jamieson, a two-time O'Brien Award winning driver, gives credit where credit is due in regards to his success, thanking the trainers and owners for all the high-profile horses he's had an opportunity to drive this year. He is also grate-

ful for the partnership he shares with WEG's leading trainer.

"That's why I am the leading driver," he stated. "A lot of it has to do with Jeff. He races a lot of horses and wins a lot of races. I am his number one driver and I appreciate that to the end of the earth. If it wasn't for him I would have about 90 or so less wins. It's been a great partnership and I hope it lasts for a long time."

Gillis, who was the leading trainer of the 2010/2011 Woodbine winter meet with Jamieson at his side as the top driver, went on to have a career year.

His stable produced 99 wins in 608 starts with \$3,248,083 million in purse earnings between the Rexdale and Campbellville ovals, which ultimately secured him his first WEG training title.

Tony O'Sullivan, who was the leading trainer at the Mohawk summer meet, finished a close second with 94 victories in 548 starts and \$2,805,298 million in earnings.

Gillis feels it's a great honour to finish atop of the standings on the WEG scene.

"It's pretty elite company who has accomplished that," said the 34-year-old Hillsburgh resident. "I am very proud of that."

"Having good owners and good help will bring good horses," Gillis explained. "I think it's kind of been in that order. You have to be around the right people first and then the horses will come."

His top performers this year were Breeders Crown champion Frenchfrysnvinegar, OSS Super Final winner Mister Herbie, Mystician, a top three-year-old colt in the OSS programme, and Champlain Stakes winner Speed Again.

All four horses have aided in making 2011 a standout year for Gillis, and as a result, he has received his first O'Brien Award nomination in the Trainer of the Year category.

"You never know how things will go in this business or if you'll ever have the opportunity to accomplish something like that again, so I am going to try and cherish it and enjoy it," he said.

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