

Sunday, February 18, 2018

Own your space - and don't mess it up

Keeneland, Woodbine and Yonkers provide valuable positioning lessons.

by Dean Towers



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I read a book about the 2016 Presidential campaign over the Christmas holiday. One section reminded me of a pretty good example about marketing.

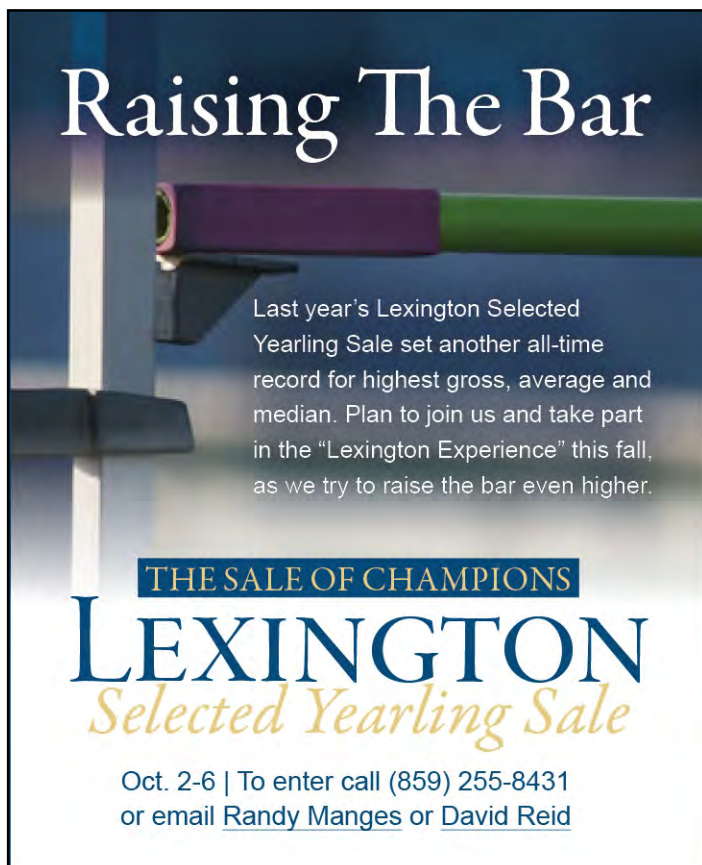
In December of 2015, on the heels of the San Bernardino shooting (and in the heat of primary season), Donald Trump announced his controversial "Muslim ban" that angered so many, including his political opponents on the GOP side. Unbeknownst to me at the time, this wasn't the Donald railing off-the-cuff like we're all used to; it was more than advertised.

"There was not one person on the Trump team who was against releasing the statement," wrote then campaign chair Cory Lewandowski. "The decision was simple – we wanted none of the other candidates to move to the right of us on immigration."

Trump, at rallies and through his public stance, had been firm on immigration. He owned the narrative, and his policies were polling well with his targeted voters. His team didn't want to jeopardize

Note to our readers

In order to provide you with a regular Sunday issue this weekend, we needed to prepare this issue a few days in advance. Therefore, we were unable to include results in this issue or any breaking news. Results and our regular production schedule will resume next week.



Raising The Bar

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2, 1:55, 3, 1:50.1 (\$2,998,777)

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As 2007 Horse Of The Year, Hambletonian Champion & the first North American Trotter to earn \$2 million in a single season, it's no surprise that his sons and daughters are consistently on top. To date he is the sire of the winners of over \$40 million with 5 millionaires and 40 \$250,000+ winners.

In 2017, his yearlings were in high demand. In Lexington, 19 averaged \$37,263; in Harrisburg, 33 averaged \$31,455.

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that standing, so they doubled down.

This, in marketing parlance, is called positioning – owning (and keeping) something in your prospect's mind. It's "Googling", when you're searching the web for something; it's having a "Coke", even though you're drinking a Pepsi. And yes, it's the phrase "immigration reform" linked to a guy in a \$2,000 suit with a goofy red cap on his head.

For years, Keeneland Racetrack in Lexington, KY, owned a great spot in the bettor's mind. Their takeout rates were low, and the way management respected customers was beyond reproach. They continually ranked high on horseplayer satisfaction surveys, and their betting handle was through the roof. Keeneland was the "Customer's Racetrack".

Then, last fall, they increased takeout.

Immediately, their positioning took a hit. Positive comments that were once commonplace on social media turned into negative ones, handle fell; goodwill turned into badwill. After a few months of discussion they decided just last week to roll back some of the takeout increases, trying to recapture what they've lost.

No matter what happens in their spring meet and beyond, we can say with some certainty Keeneland broke a cardinal rule of positive positioning: Once you have it, you can't put it at risk.

Over on the harness side, there are several examples of positive positioning happening right now as we speak.

The Woodbine & Mohawk Pick 5 is a real cracker. The bet was created just two seasons ago and with pool sizes near \$100,000 per wager, it's flying off the virtual betting shelves. It commonly delivers massive payouts, and at a takeout rate of just 15 per cent it has strong mathematical value that players are flocking to.

The WEG pick 5 is so strong that it's blowing away the handle of its sister bet on the thoroughbred side (instituted at near the same time, but curiously at a higher takeout rate). This is no small feat because the runners command total handles near double that of the standardbreds on an average race card. There is no possible way the trotters and pacers should be more popular via this wager, but they are.

Woodbine owns the pick 5 space in harness racing. Their job now is to make it better; and most importantly, to not mess it up.

Over at Yonkers there's something happening, too. Simulcasting various cards to France provide bettors in North America with something they crave at small ovals – pool size. Owning this space has helped put the Empire state track on the radar of some players here in North America.

Their focus on the International Trot fits nicely in this vein, as well. Yonkers is positioning itself as an American destination for European bettors. Anything that forwards this message is a positive in the positioning world.

The biggest detriment, of course, is that only win and show pools are offered overseas, not exotics. However, it has opened doors and if there is some way to allow overseas punters to bet



into super or pick 5 pools in the future, the sky, in my view, is the limit for Yonkers. They could go from ho-hum to must play, virtually overnight. That's what strong positioning can do.

In horse racing – and other businesses too – we sometimes find a lot of CEOs and CMOs who want to be everything to everyone; to promote every feature, every benefit; every nook and cranny of the business. Often times this is the wrong approach. Promoting what your track or game does best and sticking to it can yield immediate and long-term dividends through positive positioning. Woodbine and Yonkers are on the right track, and they can learn from Keeneland that staying focused on their goals should be of strategic importance. Owning a space – and keeping it – is job one.

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EXPLOSIVE TALENT IN EVERY CROP



EXPLOSIVE MATTER

2, 1:55f, 3, 1:52.3-1:53f (\$1,510,542)

Cantab Hall - Fireworks Hanover by Muscles Yankee

World Champion at 2 and 3, very fast, a wonderful individual and extremely well bred. Today he is the sire of the winners of over \$20 million including Hambletonian champion Pinkman 3, 1:51 (\$2,638,988), Phaetosive 2, 1:53.1-'17 (\$277,740), etc. At the 2017 yearling sales he was very well received - in Lexington, 12 yearlings averaged \$51,167.

Fee: \$5,000

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Becker calls impending induction to Communicators Hall “tremendous honor”

by Ken Weingartner / USTA Media Relations Manager

Carl Becker was barely a teenager when he provided play-by-play for a summer softball league in Altamont, IL, but at that moment he knew he wanted a career behind a microphone. Becker's election to harness racing's Communicators Hall of Fame is the result of his ambitions fulfilled, although not exactly as he imagined during those early days.

“I thought I was the next Cardinals baseball broadcaster; I had no doubt in my mind that's what I was going to be,” Becker said with a laugh as he recalled his start. “Things took a little turn. It worked out the best for all of us, including the Cardinals fans probably.”

Becker, who has spent more than five decades calling horse races, will be honored at the Dan Patch Awards banquet in Orlando, FL on Feb. 25, with his official enshrinement in the Communicators Hall of Fame coming July 1 at the Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame in Goshen, NY.

“It's a tremendous honor when you think about the people that are in the Hall and the ones that are going in,” Becker said. “It's something I didn't expect and I really appreciate it.”

Also elected to the Communicators Hall of Fame was writer Dave Briggs. Elected to the Hall of Fame were Jules Siegel and Margareta Wallenius-Kleberg, two of the sport's most successful breeders and owners.

Becker's introduction to harness racing came at the Effingham County Fair in Altamont.

“I would watch the horse races and I loved them,” Becker said. “When I got to high school, my buddies and I would pick a number and play for a penny or a nickel. I couldn't get away from it. I liked the excitement of it. I had a favorite horse named Trigger Colleen. When he raced at Altamont I was on edge the night before and couldn't wait to see what happened the next day. It just kind of grew from there.”

His path to the racetrack announcer's booth was gradual, but his career picked up steam quickly once he headed that direction. Becker graduated from the University of Illinois, where he majored in agricultural education and minored in animal science, and spent five years as a teacher. He was 27 when he began calling races regularly at the fairs and soon found himself on some of the sport's biggest stages.

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"The announcing part, I thought I could do that," Becker said. "It all just fell into place. I just thoroughly enjoy watching horses race. We would have some very competitive races at the county fairs.

"I did the Illinois State Fair, and that was a dream come true. Back then, the Grand Circuit went from Springfield to Indianapolis to Du Quoin, and The Red Mile was a few weeks later. I did the Illinois State Fair, and I did Indiana, and Du Quoin and The Red Mile. It was a six-week period and it was exciting. I saw all the great drivers, all the great horses. It just was a real trip."

Two of Becker's many memorable days occurred in 1980. The first was Billy Haughton winning the final Hambletonian Stakes at Du Quoin with Burgomeister, a horse owned by his late son Peter, who had died in a car accident earlier that year. The second was Niatross' 1:49.1 world record time trial at The Red Mile, which marked the first time a horse broke the 1:50 barrier.

"I was very blessed," Becker said. "Two of the greatest moments in harness racing I was fortunate to be part of. The Haughton win with Burgomeister, there were a lot of tears



USTA

Communicators Hall of Fame inductee Carl Becker.

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2, 1:58.2s; 3, 1:53.1s; 1:50 (\$1,141,831)
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- 2017 NYSS Winner, Guardian Angel As, 3, 1:54.1f -'17 (\$275,483)
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2018 LIVING HORSE HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE



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p, 2, 1:54.3f, 4, 1:51.2, 5, 1:48 (\$1,455,422)

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Fee: \$7,500

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flowing. It was a very emotional time.

"The Niatross time trial, to this day I haven't seen anything like it. The emotion was unbelievable. When he hit the wire the crowd erupted. People were rushing onto the track wanting to touch the horse. (Trainer/driver) Clint Galbraith was so generous and so good; he spent a lot extra time on the track making sure people did get to touch Niatross."

Other top races for Becker included Workaholic's win in the first Breeders Crown in 1984, the world-record 1:51.2 dead heat between Jaguar Spur and Laag in 1987, and Trim The Tree's world-record 1:53.3 mile in the rain in 1982. All three were at The Red Mile.

Becker's career in harness racing has also involved owning and breeding horses as well as serving as a pedigree reader for numerous auctions. The 80-year-old remains active as a pedigree reader and still calls races at the fairs.

"I do seven or eight fairs a year now," Becker said. "I do as many as they ask me to do. It's fun. My son Kurt does a few fairs when he's home. Between us we do most of the fairs in the area."

Becker's enthusiasm for harness racing has been a key to his success.

"You have to be excited about what you're doing," Becker said. "If you're not excited, it's hard to call races. For two minutes, you have to put something into it. I believe it's always come naturally because I've always felt that way. I've always been excited."



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HARNESS RACING UPDATE

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What we can learn from the Sartin approach in terms of leadership for success

by Frank Coto

Many in track management may find it uncomfortable trying to get closer to their customers. It's something new, and after all, isn't it safer to keep one's distance from those who — a hum — gamble?

That feeling is neurotic; making management react to the very people it needs to stay in business. Management should not react, it should act, and the actions should serve the needs of its public. Fear of losing patrons, however, should not be the motivation for management to serve wisely. Desire to help them succeed with the product and become walking, talking advertisements to attract new “partner” players is the motivation.

Here's psychological evidence that bending over backwards to keep and attract players will work on the many levels we are addressing in this monthly column. This example comes from the world of thoroughbred wagering.

A few decades ago, a doctor of psychology, Howard Sartin, was practicing in Los Angeles. Suddenly, he found himself treating a large number of “problem horseplayers.” These were fellows for whom the aprons of Hollywood Park and Santa Anita — during those tracks' year-long sharing of the pari-mutuel thoroughbred circuit — were sacred ground. However, none of them were at all successful. Their passion for pari-mutuels cost them far more than money. Some lost their jobs, some lost much of their health and others lost their families.

Dr. Sartin listened to story after story about how these people wound up losing dollar after dollar, getting barely enough back through their own churn to lose more until the axe fell and they were broke and broken, forced to seek help for their “terrible addiction.”

However, what initially bothered Sartin was that these were not degenerate gamblers. None of them begged, borrowed or stole to make any kind of wager. None of them simply sought the “action” of gambling, as genuine gambling addiction provokes. These were, indeed “problem horseplayers” because they had problems playing the horses and that alone was the foundation of their demise.

This made Sartin inquire to each of them about the tools they used to decide upon which horses to wager upon. Sartin knew nothing about horse race handicapping or betting, so he needed to know one thing above all — why were they losing? It seemed ridiculous to delve into matters of addiction, since a true gambling addict is rarely choosy about his or her source of thrills.

Each patient thoroughly described their ways and means of playing pari-mutuels, covering all sorts of gimmicks, angles and a plethora of information that was difficult to measure, certainly proven by the percentage of their losses. Sartin saw the similarity in the problems as well as he saw the importance of his patients' crusade to conquer the game by profiting from it.

Sartin developed a simple, but alternative, to treating problem horseplayers. He decided that rather than convincing them to stop wagering on pari-mutuels, he would be better off teaching them how to win. So, with their help, he learned all he could about technical aspect of the sport and after some time began to instruct his patients using a fresh outlook on handicapping. He tested it himself and found it extremely successful, just as he experienced aspects of what his patients loved about playing the game.

A “Sartin” approach to betting and winning swept beyond his own patients when he wrote about his handicapping/betting tactics, creating a slew of players and followers — literally swearing by his methods and calling him their “guru”. They advertised his methods freely while demonstrating through newfound profit-making that they were not the losers that met Sartin in therapy.

Doc Sartin, as his followers called him, passed away in 2009, leaving a legacy that has continued to wager through all of the sport's turmoil of modern times. Doc inspired other horseplayers, people who he never treated, to succeed and a few wrote their own books about his theories and matters of what became known as “investing” in pari-mutuels instead of “gambling” on them.

I am not suggesting that racetrack management come up with a revolutionary system to assure more people cash tickets. I am using the Doc Sartin approach to prove how becoming close to clients, customers, patrons, etcetera, gain trust and respect — enough to develop a loyalty with management that turns them into positive word-of-mouth advertisers.

It is possible to develop relationships with anyone who uses a product or service rendered. By displaying interest and giving patrons tools they need (more on this in future columns) and making sure they receive, for free, all they need to play, they are left to wager more at your raceway than at another — even if they stay at home and wager via the Internet or with a phone app while doing any other activity.

More every month on the pari-mutuels partner revolution.

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FIRST YEARLINGS SELL IN 2018



SEBASTIAN K

1:49f (\$2,973,252)

Korean - Gabriella K by Probe

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Some more notes about Howard Beissinger

by Bob Heyden

Hall of Famer Howard Beissinger, who died Feb. 6 at age 94, gave John Campbell his first Hambletonian drive and first heat win in 1983 aboard Joie De Vie. With \$1.007 million at year's end, Joie De Vie became history's first trotter to surpass \$1 million in single-season earnings.

Beissinger's Speedy Somolli was the first 1:55 trotter in Hambletonian history in 1978. Speedy Somolli was a son of Speedy Crown, as was Prakas, who in 1985 became the first sub-1:55 Hambletonian winner.

Speedy Crown was bred, broke, raised, trained and driven by Beissinger and became the sport's all-time leading sire at over \$102 million – which still stands today.

Three Hambletonian winners and the richest ever female (Moni Maker) are all Speedy Crowns.

Beissinger drove in the Hambletonian from age 46-66, winning with two of his first three assignments.

He was second in the first Hambletonian in New Jersey in 1981 with Super Juan.

Some Ray Schnittker tidbits

Ray Schnittker's Deweycheatumnhowe is the only undefeated winner of the Hambletonian. That victory made Dewey 15-for-15. Dewey also won the Canadian Trotting Classic from post 10 and is the lone winner of a million-dollar trotting event from that spot.

Schnittker's One More Laugh won the 2010 Meadowlands Pace over eventual Horse of the Year Rock N Roll Heaven. One More Laugh also won the Cane Pace in then record time of 1:50.3.

Schnittker is the only man to win the Presidential final at over 50-1. In 1991, Covert Action paid \$118.

Schnittker's first two Hambletonian drives looked a lot alike:

In 1997, he was third with Ambro Plato. In 2000, he was third with Ambro Trick. Both were 3.70-1 in their elimination. Both finished fourth in their elimination and third in the final. Both went off at over 40-1.

Schnittker is the only trainer to make as much as \$930,000 in a single trotting race – the 2008 Hambletonian – when he was first and third with Dewey and Make It Happen (\$750,000 for first and \$180,000 for third).

Schnittker's Huntsville was the co-world record setting freshman of 2016 (1:49) and was bred and owned by Schnittker.

First and Foremost

Jim Morrill, Jr.'s first Breeders Crown winner was also the fastest in the 33-year history of the Crown. He won in 2009 in 1:47 with Won The West.

Quiz

Q. In either harness racing or thoroughbred racing, who is the only Triple Crown winner to sire a Triple Crown winner?

A. It happened in thoroughbred racing in 1930 and 1935 when 1930 Crown winner Gallant Fox sired 1935 winner Omaha. Had the nose gone the other way in the 1992 Little Brown Jug, there would have been a standardbred Triple Crown winner that sired a Triple Crown winner, as well. Had Western Hanover nosed out Fake Left in the raceoff that year, he would have won the Triple Crown. Western Hanover went on to sire 1997 Triple Crown winner Western Dreamer.

Lady Double

With Jennifer Lappe and Stacy Chiodo winning the daily double at the Meadowlands last Friday night, it marked a Meadowlands first. The \$192 payout wasn't bad either. The first – and only other – time two female drivers won the daily double in New Jersey it happened at Freehold way back in June 1972 when June Weller and Jacqueline Ingrassia did it first.

Other lady firsts at the Meadowlands include:

Susan Looney winning at 16 in 1984 with One For All.

Ingrassia with the first sub-1:55 winner on July 25, 1986 with Followme Holly (1:54.4) and later winning the richest race won by a female driver taking the \$204,000 Goldsmith Maid with Aeronautess.

JoAnn Looney drove on Sept. 3, 1976 to be the first woman to compete in a race at the East Rutherford, NJ plant.

The unusual case of Newport Dream

You don't see this often, if ever – a Hambletonian winner that was 20-for-22 as a freshman but won just two races as a sophomore. In 1954, Newport Dream's only two wins came on Hambletonian Day. He was 6 2-0-0 for the season.

The next two years looked dull also. In his 4-year-old season, he was 19 1-2-4, \$13,082. The next year he was 14 2-0-1, \$10,421.

For his career he was 61 25-2-5, but was just 3-for-33 after his Hambletonian-winning year.

Holy, Scott

Did Joe O'Brien really get Scott Frost for \$8,200 as a yearling in 1953? Yes he did.

Did You Know....?

... That 175 stallions were nominated to the inaugural Breeders Crown year of 1984, including nine Triple Crown winners?

20th Century stats

David Miller 5,318 wins, Dave Palone 7,392 wins = Combined: 13,310 wins.

Herve Filion won 14,783 races alone in the 20th century. Sometimes we forget how dominant this man was for what seems like an eternity.

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BREAKING STRIDE

Adventures in Infidelity

by *Trey Nosrac*

Even the most ardent lover of harness horse racing can occasionally stray. Temptation lurks everywhere. Ninety-nine percent of my gambling money goes to the trotters and pacers, but recently I considered a fling with a stranger during a cold winter of racing.

My latest infatuation is snooker. I squander hours and hours watching this endlessly fascinating game on my iPad. For the most part, snooker fans reside in Europe and Asia. Americans are more likely to think of snooker as a verb. ****snooker** (verb): "to cheat," early 1900s, from **snooker** (n.), probably because in the game novices can be easily tricked, the term is also used in the game itself to represent a position of difficulty.*

At first glance, the game of snooker appears simple. Like harness horse racing or chess, the more you learn and the deeper you dig, the more intriguing things get. Snooker has a trajectory like harness racing. Spurred by the ability to televise matches, the billiard-like game had quite a run of popularity. Then the television ratings took a dip, but streaming via computer breathed new life into the game.

Once I got a handle on snooker, became familiar with the star players, the venues and, pardon the pun, understood many of the angles, I decided to lay down a few quid on the outcome of a match.



Obviously, people wager on snooker. The players have logos that advertise various wagering sites embroidered in their tuxedo-like shirts. One afternoon, I decided to wager on Ronnie (The Rocket) O'Sullivan playing a match against John (The Wizard of Wishaw) Higgins. The tilt of these titans, a best of 19 frames affair, would take place at The Crucible.

At this point, dear reader, I pose a question to you.

Sitting in my Uber, idling in a Dollar Store parking lot on the corner of Carnegie Street and Huron Avenue, I can, and have, used my iPad to gamble on many live harness races. The question is – can I place a \$30 wager on this upcoming snooker match? Circle your answer – YES or NO.

I honestly did not know.

I Googled a gambling site I was familiar with from shirt logos of star snooker players. I chose one of the largest wagering outfits, one that sponsored major tournaments. I began the annoying task of filling out my application, credit card, etc. Suddenly, a banner appeared on my iPad and

Lis Mara

4,1:47.3 (\$2,141,661) Cambest-Lisheen-Abercrombie



Get in on the ground floor of the anticipated
New Jersey resurgence with a proven sire

By the time the RESULT of your 2018 breeding to the sire of the brilliant Mel Mara p,1:47 (\$982,402), Validus Deo p,3,1:48.4 (\$503,891) Ontario Success p,1:49 (\$441,850) reaches RACING AGE, the New Jersey racing climate will likely be altogether different under the direction of our new administration.

Lis Mara will stand for 2018 at Deo Volente Farms for the modest fee of **\$2,500***.

*For 2018 breeding season, SBOANJ will rebate 50% of the 2019 paid stud fee for pacing stallions.



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covered the screen, "You are forbidden from wagering from this location."

Although it happens frequently, Trey is not a fan of "being forbidden." Harness racing has never forbidden my money or me. This denial felt like a slap in the face of the United States of America and I immediately blamed the current resident of the White House. Alas, for once, he was not to blame; the gambling restrictions preceded his reign.

Undeterred, and determined to risk my \$30 on the action to take place on the felt cloth (called the green baize) of the table beneath the bright lights in South Yorkshire, I explored deeper. I squandered a few hours on my snooker-wagering situation. This resulted in an agonizing decision and a semi-happy ending.

To cut to the chase and answer the question at hand – could I wager on the O'Sullivan versus Higgins match?

Technically and legally, the answer is in the negative.

In real life, the answer is sure, if you step over the line and use a Virtual Private Network.

"VPNs do not allow you to circumvent local laws without consequence. Each state within the United States, as well as every country in the world, has its own set of regulations governing online gambling. Using a VPN to access a betting website in a region that forbids online gambling is still breaking the law. You can also run into legal issues by accessing betting sites across borders, so always be cautious and do your research before placing your first bet."

The above disclaimer from one of the many VPN sites that craved my gambling money was an attempt to cover their bases. After the site gave me this semi-stern warning and obligatory disclaimer, they proceeded to show how and why I should step over the invisible line with them.

"By using our VPN, you can access any betting website you like in complete privacy."

My snooker gamble boiled down to this – should I keep my nose clean, or should I cross the line and risk my money and what is left of my reputation in a sketchy gamble overseas with a VPN.

I kept my \$30 in the USA. This turned out to be a good idea.

Ronnie the Rocket did not soar in this match. Higgins got a fluke, made a tough double to get started, and made a century in the fourth frame. The Wizard of Wishaw did not look back and potted like a terror. I would have lost my snooker wager and my thirty dollars.

When I decided to follow the letter of the law, my pending



Ronnie "The Rocket" O'Sullivan

\$30 of gambling money continued to burn a hole in my pocket. I wagered it on a trotting race from the Big M, placing \$10 across the board. The trotter finished a nice second at 4-1 and I made a few dollars. I also felt amazingly patriotic for keeping my money at home and patronizing harness racing.

The moral of this story is ... crime would not have paid (in this case).

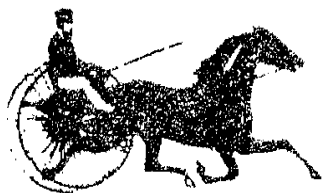
** **Snooker** (UK: /ˈsnuːkər/, US: /ˈsnʊkər/) is a cue sport which originated among British Army officers in Etawah, India in the latter half of the 19th century. It is played on a rectangular table covered with a green cloth, or baize, with pockets at each of the four corners and in the middle of each long side. Using a cue and 22 coloured balls, players must strike the white ball (or "cue ball") to pot the remaining balls in the correct sequence, accumulating points for each pot. An individual game, or frame, is won by the player who scores the most points, a match is won when a player wins a predetermined number of frames. In the 1870s, billiards was a popular sport played by members of the British Army stationed in India. Snooker gained its own identity in 1884 when officer Sir Neville Chamberlain, while stationed in Ooty, devised a set of rules that combined pyramid and life pool. The word "snooker" was a long used military term used to describe inexperienced or first-year personnel.*

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on Facebook**

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Yonkers Raceway

2018 George Morton Levy Memorial Pace

Open FFA Pacing Series

\$1,750,000 Estimated

Late Closing Series At Yonkers Raceway

Nominations Close - March 1, 2018

Nomination Fee - \$5,000 Starting Fee - \$1,000/Leg No Supplements (U.S. Funds Only)

March 17	First Preliminary	\$50,000 Each	April 14	Fifth Preliminary	\$50,000 Each
March 24	Second Preliminary	\$50,000 Each	April 21	CONSOLATION	\$100,000 G
March 31	Third Preliminary	\$50,000 Each	April 21	FINAL	\$200,000 A
April 7	Fourth Preliminary	\$50,000 Each			

Conditions

- These races will be conducted under the rules and regulations of New York State Gaming Commission, Harness Racing Division, and Yonkers Raceway General Rules and Procedures.
- A Trainer/Owner will be limited to 1 (one) declaration per division for each preliminary.
- All races are one mile. The fields and post positions for all races; preliminary, final and consolation will be drawn by lot.
- If there is more than one division of any preliminary race, each division will race for the full advertised purse. If more than one division of any preliminary race is required, right is reserved to race one or more of these additional divisions on the next two racing nights.
- The final will be determined by points. The horses with the most points will determine the final.
- 50 points for 1st place finish: 25 points for 2nd, 12 points for 3rd, 8 points for 4th, 5 points for 5th. (Dead Heats will be divided evenly)
 - 25 Points for each start. If any preliminary race is cancelled for any reason the horses entered receive 25 points. Make-up races will solely be determined by the Raceway at their discretion. If a make-up is re-scheduled, only those horses entered in the cancelled race may declare in, however, no points for starting will be given.
- The final race will be limited to, but not restricted to eight separate betting interests. Choice of a starter in the final of this series from those horses that are declared in of the horses with the same points will be drawn by lot.
- Any horse that changes owner or trainer after time of declaration of its first start in the series will be ineligible to race in the finals or consolations. The consolation race must have six separate betting interests or it may be canceled by the raceway.
- Purse Distribution: 50% - First, 25% - Second, 12% - Third, 8% - Fourth, 5% - Fifth. (Dead Heats will be divided evenly)
- Nominations close March 1, 2018. Nomination fee: \$5,000 - Starting Fee: \$1,000 each Leg. There will be no Starting Fee for the Final or Consolation.
- Yonkers Raceway reserves the right to refuse any horse, trainer, driver and/or owner to race in this series.
- Declarations to start will close at a prescribed time and date, and must be made for all preliminary final and consolation races.
- Should circumstances prevent the racing of any or all of these races; monies paid in will be refunded to owners of horses nominated unless one race of the series has been contested. In the event of weather or other unforeseeable cancellation of the final race, a make-up will be made the following week or the next conceivable date. All divisions of a Preliminary must be completed in order for points to be earned.
- One charted line meeting the qualifying standards will be required within 30 days. If continued satisfactory performance is not maintained in races, additional qualifying line(s) will be required and subsequent declarations rejected until this requirement is fulfilled.
- Judges official order of finish will be used in determining eligibility to the Final events, exclusive of all appeals yet to be decided at the time of declaration to the Final events. In the case of a positive drug test, all appeals will be excluded from eligibility to final events until they are resolved by adjudication.

NOMINATION BLANK

Name of Entry	Color	Sex	Age	Sire	Dam

Owner or Trainer Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____

Make checks (U.S. Funds Only) payable to: YONKERS RACING CORP.

Mail to: RACE OFFICE - YONKERS RACEWAY CORP., - 810 Yonkers Ave. - Yonkers, New York 10704 • Phone: (914) 457-2627

Harness racing Immortal nominations due

Time is running out for members of the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame to submit Immortal nominations for the Class of 2018.

All Museum members have the privilege of nominating persons and horses who they feel have made a significant contribution to the sport of harness racing. The nominees must be deceased at least three years to be eligible for consideration. Nominations must include a complete biography of the subject and detailed harness racing career statistics, when applicable. **Nominations must be postmarked no later than March 1, 2018.** They may be emailed on or before that date to director@harnessmuseum.com or mailed to the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame, 240 Main Street, Goshen, NY 10924.

NOTE: Nominees selected by the Immortals Committee of the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame in 2018 will be inducted in July 2019.

– *Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame*

Deadline approaching to register mares for NJ Standardbred Development Fund

Owners of mares in foal that are based in New Jersey are reminded that the deadline to register a mare for the 2018 foaling season to the Standardbred Development Fund is Feb. 28. The registration fee is \$100 and the mare registration forms are available on the New Jersey Sire Stakes website—www.newjerseysirestakes.com.

All checks should be made payable to the New Jersey Sire Stakes and mailed to New Jersey Sire Stakes, P.O. Box 330, Trenton, NJ 08625. Registered mail is encouraged to be certain that the envelope is postmarked no later than February 28.

Any questions or requests for further information can be directed to Chris Castens, NJSS Executive Director at 609-292-8830 or to agmcast@ag.state.nj.us.

– *Chris Castens / NJSS*

Dan Patch Awards silent auction to benefit HHYF, USHWA

The Dan Patch Awards Dinner is rapidly approaching and

along with it, the annual silent auction held in conjunction with the evening's festivities on Feb. 25 in Orlando. Once again, the Harness Horse Youth Foundation and USHWA's industry outreach will benefit from the sales.

This year's auction features a wide variety of items so there is sure to be something of interest for everyone in attendance. Phone bidding is possible but must be arranged prior to Feb. 24.

Lots available include:

- 14K horsehead necklace with diamond and chain (donated by Bow River Jewelry);
- 2018 Preakness Stakes Package (donated by Maryland Jockey Club);
- The "Campbell Collection" of memorabilia including board game, posters, shirts, hats, programs and more – most autographed by the one and only John Campbell;
- Custom harness racing stained glass panel (donated by Barbara Dresser and Callie Davies Gooch);
- Signed and numbered Always B Miki mounted pen & ink print (donated by Michelle Hogan);
- "Night on the Meadowlands TV Set" experience;
- "Handicapping Session with Garnet Barnsdale";
- Production of audio advertising piece by Retromedia;
- Rosen Shingle Creek hotel vacation package (donated by same);
- Baseball package including tickets for Mets and Phillies games (donated by Nick Saponara);
- Collection of framed, vintage cigar box labels of Ashwood, Peter Manning, and Single Kay;
- Off & Pacing game package;
- Set of 6 hand-painted goblets (donated by Suzanne D'Ambrose);
- Variety of gift baskets from Batavia Downs, Hoosier Park, Ohio Sires Stakes, Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame, and Hambletonian/Breeders Crown;
- Gift certificates from Fennell's, Big D's and The Red Mile Gift Shop;
- And perhaps a few late entries!

Proceeds from the silent auction go to fund the Harness Horse Youth Foundation's Summer Programs as well as the U.S. Harness Writers Association's industry outreach initiative, which this past year made contributions to the Harness Racing Museum, Historic Track rebuilding fund, the Filion family and the Clyde Hirt Media Workshop during

Hambletonian week.

For complete information, item descriptions, available photos and bidding instructions, please visit www.ushwa.org or call Steven Wolf at (954) 654-3757 or Ellen Taylor at (317) 908-0029.

– Ken Weingartner / USTA media relations manager

Dan Patch Awards to be streamed live

And the winner of the E. Roland Harriman Award as the 2017 Horse of the Year is...

At approximately 10 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 25, emcees Roger Huston and Jason Settlemoir will fill in the blank at the annual U.S. Harness Writers Association's Dan Patch Awards banquet at Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, Fla.

If you aren't among the attendees at the dinner you can still watch the big announcement – as well as that of Trotter of the Year and Pacer of the Year – as the entire awards ceremony, sponsored by Weaver BrusceMI LLC and Ron Burke, will be broadcast live on USHWA's Facebook page, which [can be accessed here](#). The entire video will also be available on the [U.S. Trotting Association's YouTube page](#) the following day, Monday, Feb. 26.

Dinner tickets must be ordered by Tuesday, Feb. 20, by contacting Judy Wilson via email at zoe8874@aol.com or by phone at (302) 359-3630. You can also order the \$175 dinner tickets on the USHWA website at www.ushwa.net. Dinner selections must be made at the time of ordering, with the choices either filet mignon, Caribbean spiced grouper or a vegetable plate. All meals are prepared gluten-free.

Post time for the evening is 6 p.m. with a one-hour cocktail reception sponsored by the Downbytheseaside Syndicate getting things under way. A special guest will be Ric "The Nature Boy" Flair, considered by many to be the greatest professional wrestler of all-time. Flair is attending the Dan Patch Awards dinner as a guest of one of the honorees and will also be meeting and greeting attendees on the Dan Patch Red Carpet, sponsored by Hoosier Park.

Also starring on USHWA's version of the Red Carpet will be Heather Vitale and Heather Wilder, with the two Heathers broadcasting live on their individual Facebook pages. It's your guarantee to see who's wearing what and what the attendees have to say about the festivities.

Heather Vitale's Facebook page [can be found here](#). Heather Wilder's Facebook page [can be found here](#).

Rooms at Rosen Shingle Creek are nearly sold out so if you plan to attend and still need to book, you can access USHWA's special portal by going to the www.ushwa.net.

– Ken Weingartner / USTA media relations manager



WESTERN VINTAGE

Bringing extreme 2-year-old speed to Ohio...

p,2, 1:49.4, p,3, 1:49.4 (\$402,478)

WESTERN IDEAL - MAJOR HARMONY - ART MAJOR



Photo by Chris Tully

First crop yearlings were very well received at the 2017 sales. We thank the breeders, buyers and trainers for their confidence in Western Vintage and wish them great success in 2018. Yearlings below were sold at Harrisburg.



#424 Western Vintage-Pacific Classic
Purchased by Brian Brown



#787 Western Vintage-Popcorn N Peanuts
Purchased by Jim Arledge, Jr.



#685 Western Vintage-Jus' Chilln Out
Purchased by Joe Seekman

WESTERN VINTAGE was a force to be reckoned with at 2, setting his mark of 1:49.4 in the Bluegrass Stakes at The Red Mile in Lexington beating the field of top level colts by four lengths, pulling away from the field!

Western Vintage swept the NJSS, winning the first two legs and then the Final to become the 2013 NJ State Champion for 2-year-old colt pacers. He then won the Metro Elim, finishing second in the final.



WESTERN VINTAGE is the top choice for those breeders looking for extreme early speed!

His sire, Western Ideal, has had much success as a sire of sires, noting the World Champ, Always B Miki from the same sire line. Rocknroll Hanover, American Ideal, and Always A Virgin, also all stemming from a great family of Champions.

Book your mare to this high speed, talented stallion.

2018 Stud Fee: \$3,500

www.abbystables.com • (330) 852-0789 • info@abbystables.com

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The only way to create a much-needed Commissioner's Office

Christopher Fenty's letter in the February 11 HRU ([full letter here](#)) really covered all the bases as to why the cheaters are unstoppable and why the future of the game is bleak. So many fans of the game have written letters and correctly defined problems that are unsolvable. We all know the problems, and we all make great suggestions that will never happen. It is time to go so far outside the box that the box is only a distant memory.

Some basic facts:

1. The USTA, the only organization with any reach, has bylaws and too many directors with different agendas to allow anything meaningful to happen.
2. Everybody who wants the game cleaned up agrees that we need a commissioner's office. But there is no entity to create a commissioner's office.
3. There is no Harness Racing Company.
4. Tracks work independently and because casino revenue is exponentially greater than harness racing revenue, the good of the casino will always override the good of racing.
5. The chances of all of the tracks working together for the good of the game is non-existent.

We all know those previous facts. They were listed as a level setting guide to understand the only possible way to go forward.

Here we go. The creation of the Commissioner's Office. In other sports, the teams united to create the office because all the teams are on the same page. They need each other. In racing, the equivalent is the racetracks. But the tracks are not on the same page. The last thing most of them (casinos) want is a Commissioner's office. So that model is out. Don't even think about it anymore. Will never happen. Do the big breeding farms want a Commissioner's Office? You can stop laughing now. So who can create a Commissioner's Office?

What makes racing so different than baseball, football, basketball and hockey? In those sports, the participants who generate income for the sport are employees of organizations that belong to a single company (i.e., MLB, NFL, NBA, NHL). In harness racing, income is generated by investors (owners) and independent contractors (trainers, drivers). By their very nature, a Commissioner's Office is a way outside the box of their thought process. They compete with each other on a daily basis. But they are the only people who can make it happen. There are no magic fairies. The cavalry will not come in to save the day. The horsemen will do it – or nobody will do it and harness racing will be no more.

A Commissioner's Office can only be created by the honest horsepeople in the business. The first order of business is for these honest horsepeople to get together to form a COMMITTEE TO CREATE A COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. Letters need to be sent out to everyone to state that they do not want harness racing to end and "You can add my name to the list of horsepeople who are willing to step up to the plate to save the game." The list of names is critical. Because the names not on the list will be telling.

Then the committee has to come up with a budget that will be financed by the honest horsepeople in the game. Now the next part will be the hard part to swallow. But it must be done to enforce the integrity of the game. Like every other sport with a Commissioner's Office, the Commissioner cannot be a horseperson. Once the COMMITTEE TO CREATE A COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE creates the commissioner's office, that committee ceases to exist.

There is so much this new Commissioner's Office can do. If you can't think of anything, just call up some of the great ideas we have seen in previous Letters To HRU. Drivers, trainers, owners, the ball is in your court. Nobody else can make this happen. Drivers, trainers and owners who know all this, and do nothing, are the guilty parties. I've read quotes from many influential horsepeople who have accurately portrayed the dire straits of harness racing. It is time to end the dialogue and start the solution. Do or Die!

– Gil Winston / Manalapan, NJ

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