

# HARNESS RACING

UPDATE

## Sweet Memories

### **BULLDOG HANOVER**

**caps an outstanding  
season by being voted  
first unanimous U.S.  
Horse of the Year**



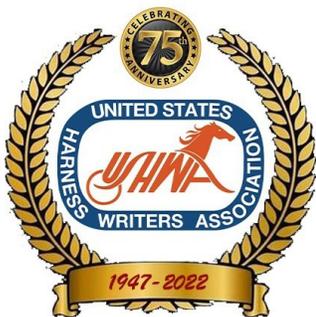
**Monday, February 20, 2023**

# BULLDOG HANOVER

## the unanimous U.S. Horse of the Year

*The superstar pacer capped a phenomenal 2022 campaign by receiving every single vote for the Dan Patch Horse of the Year. He was also voted Pacer of the Year and the Stan Bergstein / Messenger Award.*

by Ken Weingartner / USTA media relations manager for USHWA



After celebrating a season of unprecedented performances, **Bulldog Hanover** was at the center of one final historic moment Sunday night as the U.S. Harness Writers Association's Dan Patch Awards banquet came to an end.

Bulldog Hanover became the first unanimous selection to receive the Horse of the Year Award, which began in 1947.

"The Bulldog," who also was the unanimous Pacer of the Year pick, was named on all 136 ballots returned in the voting conducted by USHWA and revealed at the banquet, which was presented by Caesars Entertainment and held at Rosen Shingle Creek resort to honor harness racing's stars of 2022.

"That's tremendous," co-owner and trainer Jack Darling said about Bulldog Hanover's unanimous selection. "He went out a winner in every way he could. That's really nice."

Trotter of the Year, also announced at the banquet, went to 4-year-old mare **Bella Bellini**. Nine trotters received at least one vote, with Bella Bellini getting 96, followed by Joviality S (13),



New Image Media

**Bulldog Hanover (with trainer Jack Darling warming up at Red Mile) has been voted the Horse of the Year in both the United States and Canada. He also is the U.S. Pacer of the Year.**



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# IN TODAY'S HRU

- Bulldog Hanover conquers North America, wins U.S. Horse of the Year page 1
- Keith: Clive Cohen is casting a long shadow page 9
- Nosrac: More adventures in breeding land page 14



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# HORSE OF THE YEAR

Harrisburg Yearling Sale Graduate



## Jack Darling & Brad Grant's Bulldog Hanover

Standardbred congratulates the connections of **Bulldog Hanover** and our other Dan Patch award-winning yearling sale graduates: **Volume Eight**, **Sylvia Hanover**, and **Test Of Faith**. Five of the last six Horses of the Year that were sold as yearlings — including Bulldog Hanover and last year's honoree Test Of Faith — were sold at Harrisburg!



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Mark Hall / USTA

**(from left) Trainer / part-owner Jack Darling, driver Dexter Dunn and part-owner Brad Grant celebrate Bulldog Hanover's Horse of the Year and Pacer of the Year awards.**

Ecurie D DK and Jiggy Jog S (8 each), Atlanta (3), King Of The North and Special Way (2 each), and Cool Papa Bell and Volume Eight (1 each).

Bulldog Hanover, a 4-year-old stallion, became harness racing's fastest all-time performer this past July with his 1:45.4 victory in the William R. Haughton Memorial at The Meadowlands. He paced four of the nine fastest race miles in history among a record six victories in under 1:47 last season.

In addition to setting the world record with his 1:45.4 score, Bulldog Hanover won a division of the Roll With Joe Stakes in 1:46 and the Graduate Series final in 1:46.1 at The Meadowlands. He captured the Harrah's Hoosier Park Pacing Derby in 1:46.3, bettering the previous track record by nearly a second.

Completing his six sub-1:47 miles were two Canadian-record-equaling 1:46.4 victories at Woodbine Mohawk Park, the first in the Canadian Pacing Derby and the second in the Breeders Crown.

Other triumphs for Bulldog Hanover included the Dayton Pacing Derby and a stakes-record performance in the TVG Series final for male pacers to cap his career.

Bulldog Hanover, who also on Sunday was honored as only the third horse to be named the recipient of USHWA's Stan Bergstein Proximity Award for outstanding contributions to harness racing,

won 14 of 16 races last year on his way to leading the sport in purses with \$1.64 million.

"A horse like him is just the horse of a lifetime," Darling said. "We just enjoyed every minute of it.

"He was enough to make a grown man cry. There were times when I was jogging him, especially when we were alone toward the end, and the tears would just run down my face. I can't explain it. That's just the effect he had on me."

Darling, who put the horse in the care of conditioner Noel Daley when he raced at The Meadowlands during the summer, owned Bulldog Hanover with Brad Grant. Dexter Dunn drove Bulldog Hanover in his final 12 starts, with Jody Jamieson also notching a Grand Circuit win with the stallion earlier in the campaign in Canada.

"I'm not surprised by (his unanimous selection)," Grant said. "I don't remember the last horse to do what he has done, and that's not to take anything away from a lot of great champions. I think he cemented himself right up there with the best of the best."

Grant received the 2022 Owner of the Year Award from USHWA and Darling received the Good Guy Award for the second time in his career.

Bulldog Hanover, a son of Shadow Play—BJ's Squall, was bred by Hanover Shoe Farms, which was recognized as 2022 Breeder of the Year.

# Dan Patch Champion Special Way



## *Bred and raised by Brittany Farms*

*Special Way*, owned by Brittany Farms, Marvin Katz and Al Libfeld and trained by Ake Svanstedt, was 2022's richest and fastest 2YO filly trotter. She became the farm's 29th Breeders Crown Champion en route to being honored as "2-Year-Old Trotting Filly of the Year."

*Congratulations*

**TO ALL OF THE 2022  
USHWA AWARD WINNERS**

# Dan Patch Champion Pebble Beach



*Bred, raised and sold as a yearling by Brittany Farms*

*Pebble Beach, owned by Patricia Stable, Joe Sbrocco, Country Club Acres, John Fodera, LA Express and Deo Volente Farms and trained by Noel Daley, became Brittany's 30th Breeders Crown Champion en route to being honored as "3-Year-Old Pacing Colt of the Year."*



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Bella Bellini, who also was a Dan Patch Award winner in 2021, became the fourth female trotter this century to receive honors at ages 3 and 4.

She hit the board in 18 of 19 races last year, winning nine, and earned \$936,702 to lead all older trotters in purses. Her mark of 1:49.4 was the fastest among all female trotters in 2022 and one of only three sub-1:50 miles for the year.

Her victories included the Breeders Crown Mare Trot as well as victories over male rivals in the Hambletonian Maturity and Caesars Trotting Classic. She also won the Dr. John R. Steele Memorial, TVG Series final for female trotters, and Six Pack Mares Open.

Bella Bellini, a daughter of Bar Hopping-Bella Dolce, was bred by owner David McDuffee. She was trained by Richard “Nifty” Norman and driven by Dexter Dunn, who was recognized as the 2022 Driver of the Year – his fourth consecutive trophy.

“Trotter of the Year, that’s pretty special,” McDuffee said. “It’s wonderful. I’m so proud of her, and I bred her, which makes it even more special.”

Previously announced Dan Patch Award divisional champions also were honored Sunday at the banquet.

Division-winning pacers were 2-year-old colt **Stockade Seelster**, 2-year-old filly **Sylvia Hanover**, 3-year-old colt **Pebble Beach**, 3-year-old filly **Treacherous Dragon**, 4-year-old mare **Test Of Faith**, and Bulldog Hanover.

Division-winning trotters were 2-year-old colt **Volume Eight**, 2-year-old filly **Special Way**, 3-year-old gelding **Cool Papa Bell**, 3-year-old filly **Joviality S**, 6-year-old stallion **Ecurie D DK**, and Bella Bellini.

Other honorees included Trainer of the Year **Jim Campbell** and Rising Star **Lucas Wallin**.

Also recognized Sunday at the banquet were the members of the 2023 Hall of Fame class, which will be inducted in July in Goshen, NY: Frank Antonacci, Per Eriksson, and Lucien Fontaine, as well as communicators Bob Roberts and Ken Warkentin.

A complete list of winners can be found [here](#) on the U.S. Harness Writers Association’s website.



Claus Andersen

**Bella Bellini (Dexter Dunn) was voted the Trotter of the Year.**

# CHAMPIONS SELL HERE



## Congratulations To Preferred Equine Yearling Graduates

*Runthetable Stables'*  
**3YO Male Trotter  
of the Year  
COOL PAPA BELL**

Consigned as agent for breeder  
Belmar Racing & Breeding

*Hot Lead Farm's*  
**3YO Female Pacer  
of the Year  
TREACHEROUS DRAGON**

Consigned as agent for  
breeder White Birch Farm

The "Seller of Champions" salutes all of the  
2022 USHWA champions and honorees,  
including Lindy Farms' **Frank "The Elder"  
Antonacci** on his upcoming induction  
into the Harness Racing Hall of Fame.



[preferredequine.com](http://preferredequine.com)

GSI, LLC 2023 | Photo: Dave Landry



## Casting a “long shadow”

*Track photographer Clive Cohen on 26 years behind the camera.*

by Melissa Keith

Clive Cohen doesn't miss many Saturday nights at Woodbine Mohawk Park, but Feb. 4 was an exception. The lead photographer for New Image Media was instead taking photos at the O'Brien Awards, celebrating Canada's best harness racing performers of 2022, and also accepting his seventh Standardbred Canada Media Excellence Award for Outstanding Photography. He had previously won in 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2021.

“When I'm not shooting [photos] and my son [2017 George Smallsreed Award winner Jacob Cohen] is also not shooting, then Mario [Glynn] works for me,” Cohen said. “He's worked for me for probably 15 years at this point. When I was shooting at the [O'Brien] Awards, he was shooting at the track that night.”

March 2023 will mark Clive Cohen's 26th anniversary as Mohawk's track photographer. He recalled how he originally started out at the Campbellville, ON track.

“I got into it because the person who was doing Woodbine and Mohawk standardbreds had had enough and he got out of it.” Cohen said. “That was Brian Smiley. He was in it for about the 50 years before me, give or take...He had to run a full darkroom in his basement and it was a whole production at that time.”

Cohen's connection to harness racing came courtesy of crossing paths with Dave Briggs, early in both of their careers.

“I had been working with, of all people, [HRU editor/journalist] Dave Briggs, at my internship after college [at the *London Free Press*],” Cohen said. “That's where Dave was working too; I think it was sports he was doing there, writing. Then Dave moved on to *The [Canadian] Sportsman* [magazine] right after the *Free Press*. Then I started shooting freelance with *The Sportsman*, and when [Brian Smiley] was looking to get out, he saw that I was doing some shooting in that industry, and I think got my name and number through Dave.”



Dave Landry

**Woodbine Mohawk Park photographer Clive Cohen in action in Lexington in 2022.**

It's fitting that Cohen's first experimentation with drones produced his latest award-winning image, “The Long Shadow.” Photographic technology has dramatically changed over the past quarter-century. Consider that when he started as track photographer in March 1997, as Cohen recalled, “there was no digital.”

Demand for winner's circle pictures and images for publications required finding a reliable place to develop film.

# CONGRATULATIONS

Dan Patch Champions | Lexington Selected Grads

## COOL PAPA BELL



### 3YO Male Trotter of the Year

Bred by Belmar Racing & Breeding and consigned by Preferred Equine Marketing, Agent. Owned by Scott Farber's Runthetable Stables and trained by Jim Campbell.

## PEBBLE BEACH



### 3YO Male Pacer of the Year

Bred and consigned by Brittany Farms. Owned by Patricia Stable, Joe Sbrocco, Country Club Acres, John Fodera, LA Express and Deo Volente Farms and trained by Noel Daley.

## TREACHEROUS DRAGON



### 3YO Female Pacer of the Year

Bred by White Birch Farm and consigned by Preferred Equine Marketing, Agent. Owned by Joseph Parisi's Hot Lead Farm and trained by Nancy Takter.



Congratulations as well to Kentuckiana & partners on their 2X Champion **Test Of Faith** and to summer Hall Of Fame inductee **Frank "The Elder" Antonacci**.

*Cool Papa Bell, pictured here, was the third straight Hambletonian winner sold as a yearling in Lexington.*

# LEXINGTON

*Selected Yearling Sale*

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GSI, LLC 2023 | Photo: Michael Lisa/Lisa Photo



“We contracted someone to do our printing for us,” Cohen said. “I can do color darkroom and black-and-white darkroom, but there’s no way I was going to set it up, at that point, because I found someone who would and he had told me about the nightmare of it. I know how finicky color printing is. So right away, there was a very good printing place, like a Kodak store, near me, and I got them to do all my printing for me from day one.

“I was living in Richmond Hill, and there was a place up there, so every morning I would drop off film to them, and every afternoon they would print it, and I would pick up [prints] on my way back into the track that night.”

Just a few years into his job as track photographer, darkrooms became optional.

“Digital was clearly on the horizon, with no end in sight,” Cohen said. “Color darkroom set-ups are very expensive and very chemical-intensive. It’s way worse than black-and-white in every regard. So, that was ‘97, and by ‘01, we were 100 per cent digital.”

Last year was a special one for Cohen and his 23-year-old son Jacob, who attends Toronto’s York University. They followed Ontario-based Bulldog Hanover beyond his home track, capturing the O’Brien Horse of the Year’s career highlights with their cameras.

“We went to see ‘Bulldog’ race and take photos of him for you guys [HRU] at The Red Mile, and then we also shot him at his final race at The Meadowlands, together,” Cohen said.

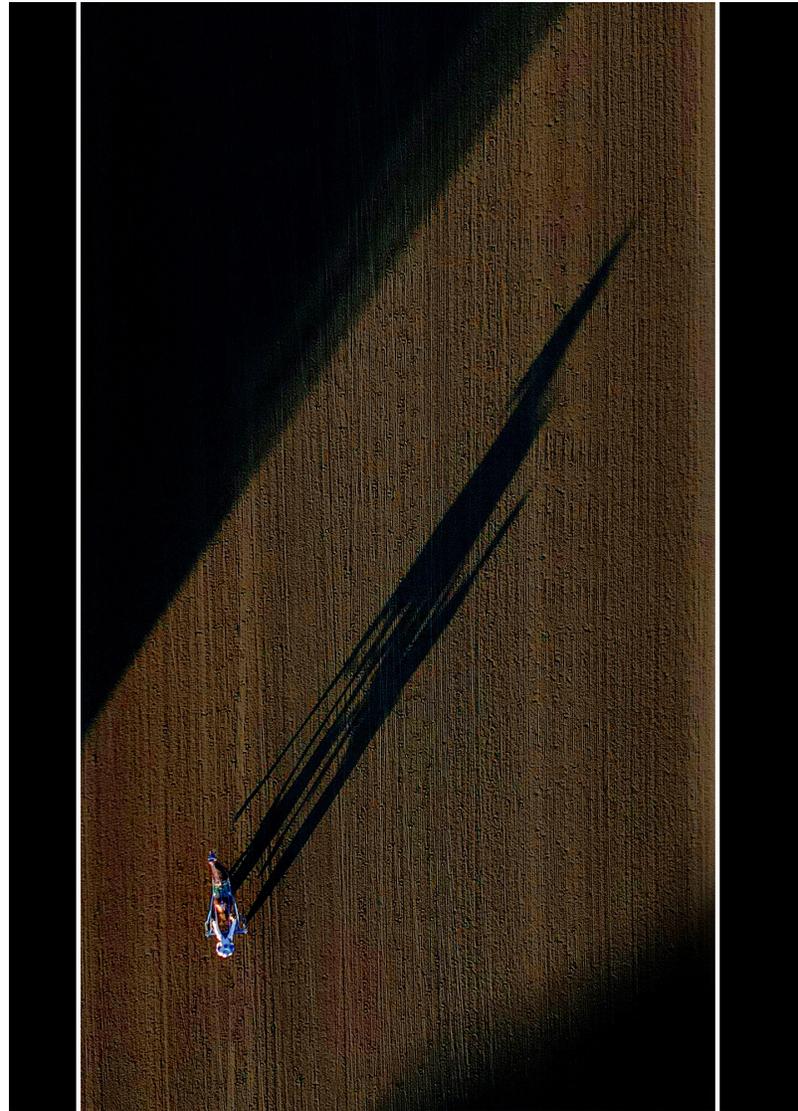
The photogenic stallion brought back memories of another star pacer he had followed from Mohawk to the United States.

“[Jacob] was too young at that point, but it reminded me of the last horse I followed around, Somebeachsomewhere,” Cohen said. “That was ‘08. I also followed him to The Red Mile and The Meadowlands. There have been a lot of good stories since then, but nothing has eclipsed ‘Bulldog’ and ‘Beach.’ Those were the two big, big ones who stirred the industry and really garnered a lot of excitement.”

In the years between those two champions, cellphone cameras have improved and become widespread. But, according to Cohen, demand for professional racetrack photography remains unchanged.

“I would say it’s the same,” Cohen said. “You know what the funny part is? Half of the professionals that I was working with and working against and trying to get good photos with back then [2008] are the same people that I’m working with and shooting against nowadays. I’m not that worried and I don’t think most professionals are that worried about people on their cellphones, because it’s a completely different photo that they get, in general.

“They are awesome – I use my iPhone plenty to get tons and tons of photos – but there’s still a very big difference between taking it with the phone and taking it with a real camera.”



Clive Cohen

**Cohen recently won his seventh Standardbred Canada Media Excellence award for photography for this “Long Shadow” photo.**

His 2022 Media Excellence Award-winning photo, “The Long Shadow,” illustrates the patience, planning and proficiency required to take a perfect aerial shot of an anonymous horse and driver at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

“I tried out a drone for a few weeks, and that’s one of the shots from it,” Cohen said. “Almost everything else would have been from my camera, one way or another. We borrow and use and buy GoPros and drones and different tools to get some different angles.

“That shot [“The Long Shadow”], funny enough, I had thought of doing for years, because in the summer, the shadows of the grandstand and the shadow of the paddock kind of form a border, and there’s a very hard shadow that comes out. But it’s got to be a clear night; there’s got to be horses in the right place; a whole lot of things have to fall into place, and I have been trying to get that for...I can’t tell you how long.



# 2023 Breeders Crown Foreign Stallion Nomination Form



Up to 15 North American Foals of 2024 by Foreign Stallions may be made eligible to the Breeders Crown with a payment by **March 15, 2023** of a Foreign Stallion Nomination Fee equal to the amount of the North American advertised service fee for a 2023 breeding. (\$500 U.S. funds minimum)



Additionally, any foals that are **foaled & registered in North America which are produced from mares bred outside of North America** may also be made eligible by a payment of the advertised stud fee in the country where the stallion stands. This payment provides Breeders Crown eligibility for a North American crop of up to 15 foals.



If the Foreign Stallion's **North American Crop is 15 foals or less**, that payment is the total amount due for these North American foals to be eligible to make the 2025 Yearling payment and maintain eligibility by the future payments to the Breeders Crown. Any additional amount ("surcharge") or refund of this nomination fee will be determined by the number of 2024 foals ("North American Crop") by these stallions standing outside North America ("Foreign Stallions") and foaled and registered in North America (either with the U.S. Trotting Assoc. or Standardbred Canada) as of August 15, 2024. All foals which are nominated as yearlings must be registered in North America at the time of nomination.



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## Stallion Information



NAME of Stallion:

Stallion AGE:  North American Service Fee:

Sire:  Dam:

Nominator:  Sire of Dam:

Farm & Country of Stallion:



## Owner Information



Owner NAME:

Owner ADDRESS:



Owner EMAIL:  Owner PHONE:



*“ I love my photos, I love taking photos and when something comes out that’s particularly striking, I’m as thrilled today with it as I was when I started doing this years ago. Whether you’re writing articles or making movies or photos, you never stop and you never rest on it. ”*

~ Clive Cohen

I’ve also tried to get it from a ladder, shooting down in that direction from the top of the stretch. It’s just a shot I’ve been trying to get. It’s been there in my mind for a while, and finally it all came together.”

Organizing images for ready retrieval is another area where Cohen said he’s witnessed innovation during his career.

“I think we’re in the same bind as most companies that produce a lot of images these days,” Cohen said. “Luckily, the computers and the cloud servers are incredible. Every photo is filed by horse’s name and by day of the week, and by month, and by year, and then we have TrackIT to help us look for things if we can’t find them for some reason. Most photos, luckily, with the amazing technology, I can pull up very easily from any computer or my phone. As long as it was taken after ‘01, I have instant access to almost everything.”

It makes his job easier when it comes to printing the ever-popular WMP winners’ circle photos. (Options are displayed at [legendsofwoodbine.com](http://legendsofwoodbine.com)).

“Oh yeah, people love their photos, there’s no question,” Cohen said. “We sell photos for most races...We do a lot of mailing out of cardboard-stuffed envelopes to owners all around North America...We send to Australia, New Zealand, Europe. For big races and lifetime marks and special races, we do an amazing amount of enlargements and framed prints also.”

The popularity of certain horses makes for best-selling winner’s circle photos.

“The big ones that stick out in my head are of course ‘Bulldog,’ ‘Beach’ and [2005 O’Brien Horse of the Year] Admirals Express [p, 9, 1:48.2s; \$1,766,644],” Cohen said. “People loved getting into those photos too. Most owners are very, very happy to have other people in the winner’s circle with them. So, fans would come in all the time and almost always buy shots of the winner’s circle for that race.”

The three-time George Smallsreed Award winner (2015, 2016, 2021) is in regular contact with the people in the best mood at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

“As people often joke with me, they love seeing me,” Cohen said. “They just won a race. I only see happy people: whoever didn’t win a race doesn’t come to tell me how sad they are, but

everyone that wins, I see minutes after the race and it never gets old, as everyone knows. It never gets old winning a race anywhere, let alone one of the greatest tracks in North America, definitely the greatest track in Canada. No matter what class you’re in, no matter what stakes race you’re in, it’s always great to win there.”

As with winning a race, there is always a degree of luck involved in creating an award-worthy image.

“I love my photos, I love taking photos and when something comes out that’s particularly striking, I’m as thrilled today with it as I was when I started doing this years ago,” Cohen said. “Whether you’re writing articles or making movies or photos, you never stop and you never rest on it.”

Cohen admires the work of his American peers Mark Hall (USTA), Michael Lisa (The Meadowlands) and Chris Gooden (The Meadows).

“I see other peoples’ photos and I’m like, ‘I wish I had something like that!’” Cohen said with a laugh. “But there’s always another shot to take and there’s always another scenario that plays out with the horses or the lighting or the clouds or the rain...Who knows what?”

Working at Mohawk gives Cohen a unique vantage point on each season’s emerging talent.

ry lucky in that I get to see the 2-year-olds hit the track for the first time,” Cohen said. “I get to see the happy owners and trainers come into my office when their 2-year-old wins for the first time. Anything is possible at that point, in the late summer or early, whenever they’re finally hitting the track, and the world is theirs at that moment. They could have the greatest horse on earth or never win again, but there’s so much possibility.

“A lot of the owners I know are also breeders and [when] the homebreds come out, it’s very exciting to watch them go through the OSS [Ontario Sires Stakes] ranks or make it to the stakes and compete in the big stakes races. While I certainly don’t have a stake in any of those, I feel I’m a part of the story.”





## More adventures in breeding land

by Trey Nosrac

A few weeks ago, I posted a true saga illustrating the unpredictability of the business of harness racehorse breeding. After pushing the send button, another true story illustrating the point leaped into my brain.

The previous story was about how our top-selling yearling resulted from a complete fluke of nature and zero research. This follow-up report concerns the finest racehorse from our little breeding business (two broodmares and 14 foals in 15 years). Names omitted to protect the innocent.

This breeding story began as usual. My partner and I owned a broodmare about to give birth to her second foal. Shortly after New Year's, we started shopping for a stallion, confining our choices to Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New Jersey.

We spent weeks and weeks on stallion research. We had dozens of discussions about state programs, yearling prices, breeding prices and countless potential sires. We pored over printouts of performances, pretended to read pedigrees and debated like Clarence Darrow versus William Jennings Bryan. Finally, we made our stallion choice and signed a breeding contract. We chose a brand-new sire, banking on the cache of a first crop in the sales arena.

All proceeded according to plan until it didn't. Our broodmare produced a fine healthy foal. During our broodmare's post-birth cycle, insemination with semen from the brand-new, ultra-promising sire took place. We were very excited: until our mare did not get back in foal the first time, the second time, the third time, etc.

The connections of the new stallion contacted us with the troubling news that very few of the mares bred to this stallion got in foal during his first year standing at stud. It happens.

In early June, we stood at the lovely farm where we keep our broodmare and her babies, looking over the fence at our broodmare and her second foal at her side. We were facing a barren season financially and fun-wise, a breeding bummer.

In the distance, from the top of a hill, a resident stallion stood looking back at us over that same fence, pawing the ground,

beckoning. This resident stallion's glory days were behind him, he was well over twenty years old and his annual book of mares bred had dwindled to a pamphlet with less than two dozen pages. Although we respected the heck out of him, this stallion was never on our radar screen. My partner and I looked at each other, shrugged and said: "What the Hell, why not throw a Hail Mary into the end zone?"

One year later, we looked over that fence and watched a fine young colt strolling beside his mother on long, wobbly legs.

With so many strikes against this colt, we did not even send him to market as a yearling. This colt was a late foal from an ancient sire, a marginal maternal family and the first foal of his mare did not make it to the races. We decided to race the colt on the cheap. We sent him out for breaking at a nearby farm, brought him back to stand part of the long winter in the field and sent him to a neighbor to log some miles on a farm track. We staked the colt very lightly and did not send him to a trainer until late February.

Long story short, this afterthought colt was the best racehorse we have produced and raced at the sire stakes level. We sold him halfway through his 3-year-old season and he is still racing competitively at age 5.

This horse and the horse I referenced in the [previous column](#), illustrate something: I'm not sure what. My partner and I have agonized, conjured, forecasted and researched carefully, selecting attractive stallions for our broodmares. Our selection process is a lot of fun, but I do not doubt that professional breeders would roll around on the floor laughing if they listened to tape recordings of our discussions about breeding.

Statistically, according to our small sample size, our sire selection process is flawed. In our case, the bottom line is this: our best seller and best racehorse were the only two foals untouched by our rigorous research, vetting and thinking. Our two panicky, blindfolded, unresearched rolls of the dice were successful, while our brilliant, carefully considered compositions were not. There may be some theory for this phenomenon, like counterintelligence or the Dunning-Kruger effect (a cognitive bias in which people wrongly overestimate their knowledge or ability in a specific area).

Whatever.

Despite our checkered horse breeding past, we are meticulously planning for the 2023 season. We have carefully selected and wildly overspent for a national-level breeding stallion. We also wildly overspent for a new broodmare. We have a detailed plan that has been two years in the making. Everything is in place. Of course, if things go off the rails, there is always a wacky Plan "B." Time will tell.

You got to love the breeding game.



# HRU NEWS

HARNESS RACING PRESS  
RELEASES, NOTES &  
ANNOUNCEMENTS

[www.harnessracingupdate.com](http://www.harnessracingupdate.com)

## 2023 Ontario Sires Stakes schedule released

Ontario harness racing fans will ring in the summer stakes season with a double dose of Ontario Sires Stakes and Prospect Series action on the Victoria Day weekend.

Flamboro Downs will host all four of the 3-year-old Prospect Series divisions on Saturday, May 20 and then welcome the 3-year-old trotting colts for the Grassroots season opener on Sunday, May 21, part of the Charles Juravinski Memorial Cup card.

The 3-year-old trotting colts will also open the Gold Series season, squaring off at Woodbine Mohawk Park on Monday, May 29.

As announced in the fall, the 2023 Ontario Sires Stakes season will see the Gold Series Super Finals go postward for \$300,000 per division and the Grassroots Championships for \$75,000. Each Prospect Series division will be worth \$8,000 in 2023, with a \$4,000 contribution from the host racetrack matched by the Horse Improvement Program.

Also new for 2023, the Gold Series Super Finals will be contested over two nights, with the 2-year-olds going postward on Friday, Oct. 13 and the 3-year-olds on Saturday, Oct. 14.

“Ontario breeders produce world class horses that, year-in and year-out, compete and win at the highest levels,” said Sandra Snyder, senior manager of Horse Improvement Program Administration at Ontario Racing. “The Standardbred Improvement Program Committee felt splitting the Super Finals across two nights gave Ontario Sired horses their best opportunity to do just that this October.”

The Grassroots Championships will once again be hosted by Woodbine Mohawk Park on Saturday, Sept. 30, with Semi-Finals on Thursday, Sept. 21 and Friday, Sept. 22, and Grand River Raceway will host the Prospect Series Finals on Wednesday, Sept. 27.

Click [here](#) to view the complete 2023 Ontario Sires Stakes schedule.

**Ontario Sire Stakes**

## Buffalo Raceway announces new Jumpstart Series

Buffalo Raceway opens its 2023 race season on Saturday (March 4). Featured in April will be a TrackMaster series for ratings 70 (F&M 71.5) or less with a final of \$20,000; 73.5 (F&M 75) or less with a final of \$25,000; and 77 (F&M 78.5) or less with a final of \$30,000.

To be eligible, a horse must race a minimum of two starts in the month of March at Buffalo Raceway.

For more information, go to [www.BuffaloRaceway.com](http://www.BuffaloRaceway.com).

*Paige Usiak for Buffalo Raceway*

## USTA-UC Davis study seeks to prevent foal abnormalities

Since the beginning of horse breeding, there have been an innumerable number of mutations and genetic advantages and disadvantages for the species. As both our knowledge and scientific advancements continue to evolve, there is hope to reveal the unknowns of genetics and continued success of the horse.

Horses have known genetic mutations. Some breeds even have their own specific gene mutations caused by breeding autosomal dominant or recessive gene mutations together without prior knowledge that the pair was affected. Some mutations can be beneficial to the horse such as creating a better performing athlete for competitions or races, surviving severe weather, or even down to a desirable coat color.

Unfortunately, some mutations can cause irreversible abnormalities that can inhibit a horse's quality of life.

To counteract these abnormalities in future foals, the U.S. Trotting Association announced in Dec. 2020 that it has joined forces with the Veterinary Genetics Laboratory at the University of California, Davis to assist in a research study entitled, “Genetic Investigation of Traits of Economic Importance in Horses.”

“The study that we, along with the team at UC Davis are leading, is an attempt to further our knowledge of genetic abnormalities within our breed. This research can't be done solely behind a desk in Westerville, Ohio, or in a lab in California. It takes all of our owners and breeders to assist us, by collecting the needed DNA samples of foals with such genetic mutations that could potentially, in turn, give breeders back the knowledge by carefully selecting away from the possible defects through

the information,” said TC Lane, USTA chief operating officer and director of registry.

Since partnering with UC Davis, the USTA has developed a protocol for reporting genetic abnormalities that can be studied utilizing genomics to investigate the possibility of mutations currently happening or that may occur in the future. Since December 2020, DNA samples have been collected and sent to UC Davis for analyzing, but more samples are needed to help verify genetic mutation similarities.

Examples of abnormalities can be (but are not limited to): microphthalmia, wry nose, cleft palate, contracted, missing or additional limbs, hernias, deformed bodies, and many more.

To assist in the study, the USTA requests that breeders and owners submit DNA samples for testing of still born foals or those with apparent abnormalities at or after birth.

To participate in the study, a report and consent form, along with photos of the foal should be submitted to the USTA. To help researchers obtain quality information on individual foals, a necropsy is recommended but not required. If a necropsy is performed, results should also be sent in along with the report and consent forms. All blood and/or hair samples should be sent directly to UC Davis to preserve the quality of the sample. The USTA can provide blood tubes to those that request them.

To obtain or get further information on the forms, contact Gabby Fleming at [gabby.fleming@ustrotting.com](mailto:gabby.fleming@ustrotting.com) or by calling 877-800-8782, ext. 3231.

Blood samples are preferred; however, hair samples may also be submitted.

Samples with identification should be sent to: Dr. Rebecca Bellone/Elizabeth Esdaile Veterinary Genetics Laboratory Old Davis Road Davis, CA 95616-8744.

Participation in the study is voluntary and any participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time. There is no financial obligation on the part of the participant.

Any data collected as part of participation in this study will remain confidential, but any of this data may be used for scientific

purposes including publication of results without identifying a particular animal, owner, or breeder. The USTA will share any results from this study that are made public or published.

*USTA communications department*

## Standardbreds at Horse World Expo in Pennsylvania

A group of standardbreds will be featured at the Pennsylvania Horse World Expo in Harrisburg, PA, March 2–5.

The standardbred booth is located on Stallion Avenue, booth S5.

With a partnership among Superior Standardbreds, the Pennsylvania Harness Horsemen’s Association and the United States Trotting Association, there will be demonstrations throughout the weekend, a large booth space and petting stall. In addition to daily demonstrations, some of the standardbreds will be featured in clinics.

Horses participating in the demonstrations and available in the petting stall throughout the weekend are:

Beans Brother and Leslie McLaren Big Drama and Heather Doll Chocolate Delight and Maria Buchanan Donnie Bop and Mackenzie Puterbaugh Fire The Dragon and Ryan Hiline Landonfitz\* and Sabine Spring (\*Available for adoption) Mister Bling A and Vianca Donadi Nardi Jim Jim and Ashley Francese Rubber Ducky and Ashley Parsells

Horse World Expo is open from noon–8 p.m. on Thursday, 10 a.m.–8 p.m. on Friday, 9 a.m.–8 p.m. on Saturday and 9 a.m.–5 p.m. on Sunday. For more information about the event, visit the Horse World Expo [website](#).

*Ashley Parsells*

The banner features the HRU logo (HARNESS RACING UPDATE) on the left. A large, diagonal banner across the center contains the text "#BETONHARNESS" in white and blue. Below this, the text "HOW MUCH DID YOU BET TODAY?" is written in white and blue. The background is dark blue with faint circular patterns.