



# News from Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association



**Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association**  
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**May 2015**

## Ohio County Fair Planning is in Full Swing

### OHHA Fair Promotions

Regina Mayhugh

It is no secret that Ohio fair racing is important to Ohio's harness racing program and the OHHA. Fair racing is the grassroots of harness racing and the OHHA is excited to have such an extended fair network in the Buckeye state! Fairs allow more people access to the sport as well as the opportunity for fans to get up close and personal with the horses and horsemen across the state.

The OHHA has more tools this year that your fair can utilize in promoting your fair race program. The OHHA has a website page set up for each fair, as well as the OHHA Facebook page that is available for posting fair racing information. The fairs will be featured more on Facebook this year than ever before through the use of photos and videos.

Ohio fairs will also be highlighted in both the summer newsletters and the July and September issues of Buckeye Harness Horsemen. These issues can be used to promote upcoming fair events as well as share highlights from the fair afterwards.

Utilize these resources by submitting photos, upcoming events, special races, promotions and anything else you are doing to promote fair racing to [rmayhugh@ohha.com](mailto:rmayhugh@ohha.com). I will be attending many fairs this summer as well. The OHHA has a new display and promotional items that can be displayed at fairs. Contact us to be placed on the schedule We are looking forward to Ohio's fair season and spreading the excitement of harness racing!

### Ohio Fairs Racing Conference

Steve Bateson

The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association is pleased to announce the 2015 nominations for the Ohio Fair Racing Conference. A total of 657 Standardbreds have been nominated to the Ohio Fair Racing Conference (OFRC), with 598 harness horses nominated for all 20 fairs that have joined the

OFRC in 2015.

The 657 nominated racehorses represent nearly 50% of the 1324 eligible Ohio-sired 2- and 3-year-old trotters and pacers.

The OFRC is represented by 20 fairs in 18 counties throughout the state of Ohio and was established to simplify the staking process for horsemen, to reduce the complexity of administering the racing program by fair boards, and to increase harness racing participation at the fairs. The OHHA would like to see an expansion of harness fair racing throughout the state. Existing racing fairs can add additional days and non-racing county fairs can add racing to their fair program. The OHHA is happy to help any fair board that would like to expand their program.

The OFRC has an eight-member board: four appointed by the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association (OHHA), and four by the Ohio Fair Managers Association (OFMA). Regional coordinators Bill Peters and Todd Brown will facilitate the harness racing program at these 20 fairs for 2015.

A complete list of the horses nominated can be found on the OHHA website on the Ohio Fairs Racing Conference page, as well as information regarding OFRC and the dates of the conference fairs.

### Ohio Fairs Championship

Steve Bateson

Many thanks to the horsemen and owners who chose to nominate to the inaugural Ohio Fair Championship at Hollywood at Dayton on October 1, 2015. 545 horses have been nominated this first year!

Horses nominated to the Ohio Fair Championship accumulate points by racing in Ohio Fair Stake races through September 24, 2015. The top nine point earning horses entered race for the Championship on October 1, 2015.

### OFMA Hold Regional Spring Meetings

Regina Mayhugh

The Ohio Fair Managers Association (OFMA) held their district spring meetings in April. On April 11th, Districts 1 & 2, in Findlay, followed by Dalton for Districts 5 & 9 on April 12th. The following weekend members from Districts 7 & 8 met in Zanesville on April 18th, and completed their meetings with Districts 3, 4 & 6 at Washington Court House on April 19th.

These meetings inform the fair boards of updates for the upcoming fair season as well as answer questions. Renée Mancino and Jerry Knappenberger attended on behalf of the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association (OHHA) and shared updates in the Standardbred racing industry along with information about funds to be provided to the fairs again this year by the OHHA (see details of the funding in the Racing Commission Recap on page 4).

The OFMA awarded Jerry Knappenberger with a plaque of recognition for the work he has done with the Ohio Fairs and with OFMA. The OHHA is proud to work with Ohio fairs and the OFMA and looks forward to another great fair season!

### Ohio's Spring Matinees

#### Darke County Fairgrounds-Greenville

Sunday, May 17, 2015 12:00 PM  
Entries taken May 14th 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.  
Speed Office: 937-548-9977

#### Defiance County Fairgrounds- Hicksville

Saturday, May 23, 2015 12:00 p.m.  
Entries taken Wed., May 20 from 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
(419) 298-7408 or (419) 630-5952

#### Mercer County Fairgrounds- Celina

Sunday, May 24, 2015 12:00 PM  
Entries taken May 21st from 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
419-586-5820

**More information can be found on the website at [www.ohha.com](http://www.ohha.com)**

# Executive Director's Report

Renée Mancino



## **OHHA Staff**

**Renée Mancino**  
Executive Director

**Jerry Knappenberger**  
Special Advisor

**Regina Mayhugh**  
Communications  
Director

**Open**  
Office Manager

**Linda Nance**  
Harness Horsemen's  
Retirement Plan  
Administrator

## **OHHA Track Reps**

**Amy Hollar**  
Northfield Park  
(614) 778-5905

**Brett Merkle**  
Scioto Downs  
Miami Valley  
Gaming & Racing,  
Hollywood at  
Dayton Raceway,  
(614) 354-1601

## **2015 Racing Dates**

Northfield Park  
Jan. 1 - Dec. 30  
(214 Live Days)

Miami Valley Gaming  
Jan. 2 - May 3  
(89 live days)

Scioto Downs  
May 5 - Sept. 12  
(95 live days)

Hollywood at  
Dayton Raceway  
Sept. 14 - Dec. 30  
(75 live days)

## **Important Dates**

**OSRC Monthly Meeting**  
June 5- 9:00 AM  
Rife Center  
77 S. High St., 31<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

**OHHA Quarterly  
Board Meeting**  
June 4- 9:00 AM  
Marriott Northwest  
5605 Blazer Pkwy  
Dublin, OH 43017

*Photos on cover by  
Conrad Photo (Miami  
Valley), Ashberry Acres &  
JJ Zamaiko Photography  
(Northfield Park).*

At the Ohio State Racing Commission's February 25th meeting they announced that the subsequent four monthly meetings would in part be used to investigate and discuss the medication and testing rules in the state of Ohio. The investigation was initiated as part of the Racing Commission's normal due diligence process, however, it was also done to help the Commission make a determination on adoption (or not) of Racing Medication and Testing Consortium (RMTC) backed Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI) promulgated model rules for medication and testing.

The Racing Commission hearing in February included ARCI President Edward J. Martin and Dr. Dionne Benson, Executive Director with the RMTC. They provided testimony on the science, process, and the efficacy of adoption.

The Racing Commission Hearing March 30th was devoted to racing industry participants' testimony. Invited for presentations were the U. S. Trotting Assn., national and state branches of the Horsemen's Benevolent & Protective Assn., and the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Assn.

The Racing Commission Hearing April 28th was devoted to practicing racehorse veterinarians. Dr. Dan Wilson, racetrack veterinarian with Cleveland Equine Clinic, LLC, full-time consummate practitioner primarily servicing Northfield Park from 1975 to date, and Dr. John Reichert, with Woodland Run, one of the most prolific backstretch veterinarians on the southern circuit, including Scioto Downs, Miami Valley, and Dayton Raceway appeared again as representatives for the Standardbred Racing Industry.

Two double-gaited Standardbred and Thoroughbred veterinarians appeared. Dr. John Piehowicz an active private practitioner with Cincinnati Equine, LLC, whose southern Ohio practice rotates among Belterra Park, Miami Valley Raceway, and Dayton Raceway, and counts multiple Kentucky Derby and Breeder's Cup winning trainers among his clientele. Dr. Scott Shell, principal with Shell Equine Services in Chagrin Falls, Ohio providing full veterinary

services from his private practice to ThistleDown and Northfield Park.

In support of thoroughbreds, Dr. Brett Berthold, another principal in Cleveland Equine Clinic, LLC appeared. Berthold practices exclusively on Thoroughbreds and has since 1995, mainly at ThistleDown Race Track where he specializes in lameness diagnosis, respiratory health, and MRI.

Research-centric practicing DVM Dr. Clara Fenger DVM, PhD, DACVIM, with an additional Master's Degree from Ohio State in the field of Equine Exercise Physiology (making her an expert in the field) appeared to provide the nuts and bolts of the research as applied to the RMTC and ARCI model rules.

All veterinarians agreed that their concern was with the commonly used regulated therapeutics, which are necessary for them to use to maintain the health and welfare of the equine athlete.

Dr. Wilson provided facts as-to testing and detection which has come a long way from "spit box" testing of only saliva, to blood, urine, and any other bodily fluid or part, "testing has become so sophisticated that things are measured in parts per trillions, the equivalent of finding one specific grain of sand on the beach". Modernly, "horse racing is the most highly regulated and tested of any professional sporting events." He provided statistics from a 2010 ARCI study of 324,215 race samples tested in the United States. Of those samples, .493% were called as positives, of those 94% were therapeutic medication overages and .015% were for class one or class two substances. With zero tolerance policies in place it is not possible to derive the number of those positive tests that could have resulted from environmental contaminants.

The main points from Dr. Wilson's testimony included a heightened concern for environmental contamination via cross contamination from Humans. Some sources include, cocaine from our tainted money supply, morphine from poppy seeds, naproxen, (Aleve and Midol) taken often by trainers and grooms to alleviate the common aches and pains

from their profession, and racetrack ship-in stalls that are used by many and which remain soiled, damp, or not thoroughly cleaned between use. Dr. Wilson advanced that as the FAA has provided environmental contamination thresholds for commercial pilots, racing should also implement an environmental, "no effect" threshold for race testing.

Drs. Wilson and Reichert both opined as-to the need for separate Standardbred, Thoroughbred, and Quarter Horse threshold levels for specific therapeutic medications. As currently promulgated the RMTC rules unfairly penalize Standardbreds and jeopardize their health, safety, and welfare.

They also highlighted that the proposed RMTC and ARCI rules would eliminate the use of Clenbuterol for inflammatory airway disease (essentially asthma) within 14 days of racing, and prevent the use of Cortisones for joint therapy in their therapeutically approved uses. Dr. John Piehowicz commented on the fact that clenbuterol was the only FDA approved medication for use in equines for ongoing therapy, contrary, "albuterol is not an effective replacement for clenbuterol, albuterol is considered a rescue inhaler to open airways in the event of an acute event, not as a control for ongoing treatment". Dr. John Reichert added the fact that, "the current published science does not support clenbuterol as performance enhancing".

Dr. Wilson provided details on New York's Standardbred policy on clenbuterol as being one model. In New York clenbuterol use is permitted with a 96-hour withdrawal time providing the horse has raced within 30 days. If not, the horse is subjected to a 14-day withdrawal time.

All veterinarians provided commentary on corticosteroids. Dr. Reichert explained that corticosteroids are often confused with anabolic steroids, which were problematic in professional baseball. Corticosteroids are a misunderstood

therapeutic tool and with judicious use in equine athletes, corticosteroids prolong the athletic career and life quality of the racehorse, and are a necessary tool for the health and welfare of racehorses. Dr. Fenger said, "the studies that have been done show that corticosteroids do not mask lameness". All opined that an ongoing study currently underway would support a six day out-time for corticosteroid use with clinically relevant threshold levels adopted. The six days would enable a trainer to provide the treating veterinarian adequate time outside of entry into the box to race to assess response to therapy before entry and the clinically relevant threshold level would permit treatment according to manufacturer recommended guidelines for therapeutic treatment.

Dr. John Piehowicz opined that, "the current Ohio common regulated therapeutic policy is the most humane in the country." However, all the veterinarians expressed difficulty with the published thresholds and a lack of out-times. One primary difficulty was that published thresholds are confusing because they are directly related to dosage and it is difficult to obey the rules when you don't always know for all common therapeutics what the rules are.

Dr. Richert outlined another issue with RMTTC thresholds and provided testimony that 18 of the 26 thera-

peutic medication studies done had not been published and subjected to peer review to support their findings and resulting threshold. Dr. Reichert also provided details on the 95/95 tolerances used as the standard for setting RMTTC thresholds. Dr. Reichert said, "the 95/95 tolerances mean there is a 95% confidence level that the 95th percentile will fall below a published threshold. That leaves 5% of horses at risk of falling outside that range, or a 1 in 20 risk of being over the threshold for that medication, subject to a positive test."

All the veterinarians requested the creation of a common sense model rule to address the horse's health and well-being as well as protecting the betting public. All requested a common sense rule that addressed physiological breed differences, environmental contamination issues, and zero tolerance policies, with reliable thresholds and recommended out-times. They requested a rule that was constantly monitored and modified with industry participation and input to handle emergent therapeutic medications. All are necessary for practicing veterinarians to address the health and well-being of racehorses by properly treating common medical ailments, while protecting the participants, and ensuring integrity for the betting public.

We thank everyone for their support and the enormous amount

of time they have devoted to this important project, particularly to the Ohio Racing Commission and Chairman Schmitz for the wide-ranging and progressive process, amount of careful study, and active participation they continue to devote to this project. For the official transcript of the hearing contact the Racing Commission.

Next month the Racing Commission will invite researchers and scientists to provide their data and information relative to currently set RMTTC thresholds, the efficacy of the underlying research, those standards, and the reliability of the ARCI published model rules. Expected to testify are, Steven A. Barker, MS, PhD, Section Head, Louisiana Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, Dr. Thomas Tobin, MVB, MSc, PhD, MRCVS, DABT with the University of Kentucky, and Dr. George Maylin Director of the New York Drug Testing and Research Program at Morrisville State College.

So once again, thank those that participated on your behalf in this very important project and stay tuned for more information to come as this process continues. Hopefully, we can help Ohio become a leader in the medication and testing realm and level the playing field for all Ohio based participants.

## OHHA Board of Directors

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## Updates From Your President

Kevin Greenfield

As we progress into 2015, the OHHA is embarking on several new initiatives. We are currently finalizing the interview process for hiring a new lobbyist to represent the OHHA at the Ohio Statehouse. It is imperative in this new era that we keep on top of any new developments as

well as having our own advocate at the statehouse to deliver any new initiatives or legislation we wish to introduce or pursue.

We are exploring marketing opportunities in social media with the USTA. Dan Leary of the USTA spoke to our Board about the possibilities

that we can utilize through their marketing initiative. I will be speaking with Rob Key of Converseon Inc., the company currently handling this marketing effort for the USTA, about how this effort can benefit our organization.

As this letter is written, the OHHA Board has approved, subject to the Racing Commission's approval, allocating \$10,000.00 to each Ohio fair this season that conducts racing and \$2,000.00 to each Ohio fair that does not conduct racing to be used for the benefit of each county fair. This generous donation greatly enhances our credible standing with each fair and allows us to garner extreme goodwill and advertising in addition to benefiting the local horseman who race at the fairs.

## Special Recognitions

Reinsman Kayne Kauffman made his 2,000th win at Miami Valley on April 28, with Chantal with a 1:58 upset win. Congratulations Kayne!

**ATTENTION: Farm Workers, Trainers, Drivers & Grooms Signups for the Harness Horsemen's Health and Retirement Plan are ongoing. You must opt-in, if you are not already an active participant, before June 1, 2015. \* You may sign up via your OHHA track representative at the racetrack and you must be a permanent Ohio resident to be eligible.\***

# Ohio Racing Commission Meeting Recap

At the regularly scheduled Racing Commission Meeting on Tuesday, April 28, 2015, at the Columbus Riffe Center, the Commission welcomed month three of their investigation on medication and testing in Ohio and received testimony opinion on the adoption (or not) of uniform RMTC and ARCI backed model rules.

Dr. Dan Wilson, racetrack veterinarian with Cleveland Equine Clinic, LLC, full-time consummate practitioner primarily servicing Northfield Park from 1975 to date, and Dr. John Reichert, with Woodland Run, one of the most prolific backstretch veterinarians on the southern circuit, including Scioto Downs, Miami Valley, and Dayton Raceway appeared again as representatives for the Standardbred Racing Industry.

Two double-gaited Standardbred and Thoroughbred veterinarians appeared. Dr. John Piehowicz an active private practitioner with Cincinnati Equine, LLC, whose southern Ohio practice rotates among Belterra Park, Miami Valley Raceway, and Dayton Raceway and counts multiple Kentucky Derby and Breeder's Cup winning trainers among his clientele. Dr. Scott Shell, principal with Shell Equine Services in Chagrin Falls providing full veterinary services from his private practice to Thistledown and Northfield Park.

In support of thoroughbreds, Dr. Brett Berthold, another principal in Cleveland Equine Clinic, LLC appeared. He practices exclusively Thoroughbreds and has since 1995, mainly at Thistledown Race Track where he specializes in lameness diagnosis, respiratory health, and MRI.

The Ohio State University and the Racing Commission also announced a partnership to do additional, focused and extensive research on Cobalt. In announcing the Cobalt Research project the costs for that will be borne out of the allocated portion of the Standardbred Development Fund and the Ohio Thoroughbred Fund, which each contribute \$100,000 yearly to Ohio State pursuant to §§ 3769.085(D) & 3769.085 (D).

During normal business the Commission passed resolution 2015-3, and provided information on the average testing costs pursuant to § 3769-8-01. The costs for testing one horse per race proposed to be deducted from the purse pools from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 was slated to be, \$170 per Standardbred race and \$162 per Thoroughbred race. As provided for under § 3769-8-01 this deduction is made from the purse pools at the respective racetracks.

In other normal business, the Commission passed resolution 2015-4, and distributed the casino tax revenue received April 15, 2015 of \$2,063,858.64. The Ohio Standardbred Development

and Thoroughbred Race Funds each received \$392,133.14. Miami Valley Gaming & Racing, Northfield Park, Scioto Downs, and Belterra Park received \$77,394.70 to support commercial operations. \$103,192.94 was transferred to the Ohio State Racing Commission to fund administrative staff positions for the Ohio Standardbred Development Fund, Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund, Ohio Quarter Horse Development Fund, and/or commercial operations at Miami Valley, Northfield Park, Belterra Park, and Scioto Downs. \$59,056.13 to Hollywood Gaming at Mahoning Valley's purse pool, \$80,783.56 to Belterra Park's purse pool, \$97,356.02 to Thistledown's purse pool, \$73,677.22 to Miami Valley Gaming and Racing's purse pool, \$318,151.64 to Northfield Park's purse pool, \$73,840.58 to Hollywood at Dayton Raceway's purse pool, \$113,946.47 to Scioto Downs purse pool, and \$25,000 to Belterra Park and Mahoning Valley to support Quarter Horse Purses.

During normal business the Commission also passed resolution 2015-5, which provided for OHHA distribution to the Ohio Fairs. The total apportioned was \$3,581,000 of which, \$2,873,000 was for purse support and \$708,000 to support fair operations. On the purse breakdown, \$5,400 was provided for each of the eight Ohio Fairs Fund races at the 65 fairs that will conduct harness racing in 2015 and \$1,000 to each racing fair to be used to increase purses for non-stakes races at Ohio Fairs. This totals \$65,000 to the 65 racing fairs. The fair must match the \$1,000 distribution, with their own funding for the non-stakes racing, over the \$1,000 minimum required by the Ohio Fairs Fund distribution for non-stakes races. \$10,000 was distributed for racing related and other expenses to the 65 fairs that will conduct harness racing in 2015. The remaining 29 of the 94 Ohio Agricultural Fairs would receive \$2,000 for fair expenses. The money was allocated out of the OHHA's VLT Discretionary Money Accounts being held at the Standardbred Pari-mutuel racetracks and will be distributed by the Racing Commission on behalf of the OHHA.

An update on the Belterra Park Agreement negotiations was provided. The Parties represented stalemate on setting the VLT Gross Gaming Revenue division. Representation was made that the Parties wanted to go below the minimum 9% rate. The Racing Commission set forth that going below the minimum was attempted at another facility (Northfield Park), rejected, and that policy remained to date.

The Gross Gaming Revenue Division had to be between 9% and 11%. Based off of that clarification the Parties represented Commission or Legislative intervention as being necessary to

breach the impasse.

An update on the Hollywood Gaming at Dayton Raceway Agreement negotiations was provided. Representation was made that progress is being made and if that changed the Commission would be updated.

An update on the horse racing fatalities was provided and so far this year there have been 3 thoroughbred fatalities and 3 standardbred fatalities.

For a transcript of the meeting contact the State Racing Commission. The next scheduled Racing Commission Hearing date will provide testimony and input from Industry Scientists on medication and testing in the state of Ohio. The Hearing will be held in conjunction with the next monthly meeting at the Riffe Center, 77 S. High St., Columbus, Ohio, date and time to be determined.

## Special Thank You

Jerry Knappenberger

This year I have been both surprised and humbled by several awards I have received. Each award is very special to me and I would publicly like to thank those people who were responsible for each award. Before thanking everyone for this year's awards, I want to thank former OHHA General Manager John Stanley for hiring me to be his assistant in November 1994, and the Board of Directors of the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association for appointing me as General Manager in July 1998, following Stanley's retirement.

I am not sure anyone should receive awards for doing something they loved to do. I became hooked on Standardbred racing in 1962, while I was in college by attending the fair racing programs with my high school classmate Terry Holton. When the company I worked for following college offered a job opportunity in their home office in Pittsburg, I resigned and began training horses with Terry Holton in 1968. We had the opportunity to train horses for some of the best owners in Ohio and from New York to California. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to train several world champions.

I would like to thank everyone for my awards in the chronological order they were presented to me in. During the January 2015 OHHA Banquet I was inducted into the Ohio Harness Racing Hall of Fame. A huge honor I never thought about and wish to thank the members of the Ohio Chapter of the United States Harness Writers Association. In March, during the Harness Horsemen International (HHI) winter meetings in Deerfield Beach, Florida HHI presented their 2014 Appreciation Award to me.

The Ohio Fair Managers Association (OFMA), the group of 95 agricultural fairs, presented me as appreciation award at their four regional meetings, at the first meeting in Findlay I was very shocked and surprised to hear my name called for this great honor. Finally, from my State Senator Jay Hottinger, I received a proclamation from the Ohio Senate honoring me for outstanding achievement in the Standardbred industry, signed by Senate President Keith Faber and Senator Hottinger. Again, Thank you to all the above!

# Track News & Updates

## Miami Valley Raceway Season Wrap Up

Gregg Keidel

Miami Valley Raceway's second season can only be described as an overwhelming success! Eighty-nine live racing programs were presented for purses in excess of \$8,000,000. With closing weekend still to come at the time of this writing, a total of six new track records had been established as the MVR five-eighths mile oval continues to receive accolades from horsemen throughout the state. In addition, paddock improvements for the second season were well received, especially the addition of gas heat throughout the expansive 150-stall building. Patrons were delighted to discover a large new infield matrix tote board had been installed and that TV monitors throughout the grandstand had been lowered to create better sightlines.

The overall track record was lowered to 1:50.1 by Ice Scraper and driver Ken Holliday on April 4. The 1:52.1 standard for mares age 5 and up was tied three times during the season, by Betterluvnexttime (Josh Sutton) on February 6, and both Native Dream (Dan Noble) and Kathys Kitchen (Dan Noble) on April 17. Holiday Shopper (Jason Brewer) originally set the record during the inaugural 2014 season. The other pacing mark lowered in 2015 was Neat (Jeff Nisonger) who paced the fastest-ever 1:51.1 mile for four-year-old horses or geldings on February 28.

On the trotting side, Boffin (Tyler Smith) lowered the record for older males to 1:53.4 on April 12.

Virgil Morgan Jr. captured his second straight Miami Valley training title with over 60 victories and over \$400,000 in stable earnings. He was followed in the top ten trainers list by Jeff Brewer, Chris Short, Dan Ater, Kayne Kauffman, Jim Arledge Jr., Jim Dailey, Jeff Nisonger, Deborah Swartz and Jim Pollock Jr.

Josh Sutton captured the driver's dash title with over 170 wins and over \$1,000,000 in purses won. His win total had Josh hovering between fifth and sixth in the national dash standings throughout the season—with all his triumphs at Miami Valley. Dan Noble was next in the top ten driver's rankings followed by Kayne Kauffman, Chris Page, Jeremy Smith, Kyle Ater, Randy Tharps, Tyler Smith, Jason Brewer and Jeff Nisonger. Kauffman notched his 2,000 career win in the closing days of the meet; while Jeremy Smith reached 1,000 earlier in the season.

Statistically, the No. 5 post position again proved most beneficial with a win percentage of 18%. 37% of betting favorites reached the winner's circle during the meet; while

70% of the favorites finished in the money (top 3).

On closing weekend, Miami Valley hosted the first legs of Ohio Sires Stakes action for the year with all the top state-bred three-year-olds coming to town. A pair of lucrative Grand Circuit races highlighted the Closing Day program on May 3.

With the VLT's inside the Miami Valley racino doing brisk business, all indications are that the third season in 2016 could be even better.

## May Updates from Northfield Park

Ayers Ratliff

**RACING:** Northfield Park continues to race four nights per week (Monday through Thursday), with a 6:00 p.m. post time. However, there will be no live racing on Memorial Day (Monday, May 25).

Aaron Merriman continues to lead our local driving ranks. He has posted 182 wins so far this year and has purse earnings of \$801,219 over the Flying Turns. Following Aaron is Ronnie Wrenn Jr. (164, \$728,526), Jason Merriman (78, \$462,211), Ryan Stahl (62, \$347,436) and Kurt Sugg (42, \$310,104).

Brian Loney and Jessica Millner are tied for the most training wins so far this year. Each has 28 victories to their credit. They lead John Kina (26), Virgil Morgan Jr. (23) and Sam Schillaci (23). Eight stables have garnered over \$100,000 in purses (Burke, Dowdall, Kina, Loney, Millner, Morgan, Nostadt and Schillaci).

There will no longer be \$3,000 claiming races written on the Northfield Park condition sheet. The lowest claiming event offered will carry a price of \$4,000. Another significant change to the conditions is that fair earnings as a two year-old will no longer count in the non-winners \$7,500 lifetime class.

The first of Northfield's 2015 marquee events will be the \$200,000 Battle of Lake Erie. It will go to post on Friday, June 12 and has attracted 22 nominees. The nominated list includes two-time Battle of Lake Erie champion and the richest standardbred of all-time, Foiled Again (1:48 f, \$6,921,281) and the defending Battle champion Clear Vision (148.2 f, \$2,312,132).

Battle nominees also include a host of other millionaire performers: Michael's Power (1:48.1 s, \$1,748,161), All Bets Off (1:48.3 f, \$1,098,092) and Twilight Bonfire (1:50.1 f, \$1,003,070). The impressive Battle of Lake Erie undercard will feature Ohio Sires Stakes for three year-old filly pace and trot.

**BACKSRETCH UPDATES:** The Northfield Park track kitchen is now open and is offering delicious food on a daily basis to horse-

men. The early reports from horsemen have been overwhelmingly positive on the quality and service they have received while dining in the track kitchen.

The 2015 paving project will soon be underway and will improve the roadway from the guard gate to the paddock. The large paving project carries an approximate cost of \$250,000. Cooperation and patience is appreciated during the time that the backstretch is resurfaced.

## Scioto Downs Racing Season Begins

Jason Roth

Scioto Downs Kicks Off its 2015 Racing Season on Tuesday, May 5th at 2:00pm. With the 2015 racing season fast approaching, three changes will be implemented. The first change being all Tuesday and holiday post times will be 2:00pm. The second change will be any horse that wins an overnight event out of the 8 hole will receive a 10% bonus and any horse that wins out of the 9 hole will receive a 20% bonus. To receive the bonus, the horse must be Ohio sired or fully Ohio owned. The third change will be any driver that finishes 6th through last place will receive \$15.00. For drivers to be eligible to the \$15.00, they must be an OHHA member. Any driver that would like to sign up to be an OHHA member may contact track rep Brett Merkle.

The 2015 racing season at Scioto Downs will have 95 race cards, commencing Tuesday, May 5 with a 2:00pm post time. Live racing will be held every Tuesday through Saturday until September 12. Post time Wednesday through Saturday will be 6:30pm, while all Tuesday and holiday cards will start at 2:00pm. For a complete race schedule, visit the Scioto Downs website.

## Golf Event Held in Wilmington

OHHA and Miami Valley hosted a horsemen's golf outing on April 27, at Majestic Springs Golf Club in Wilmington, Ohio. There were 100 golfers who teed off and 25 others joined them for a cookout following. Special Thank You to all those who sponsored the event and to those who participated. Be sure to visit the Facebook page to see more photos..





Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association  
850 Michigan Avenue, Suite 100  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-1920



## Thank You to our 2015 P.A.C.E.R. Contributors

### OHHA Pacesetters *(in alphabetical order)*

Tony & Jo Anderson	Fred & Barbara Huff	Dayle Roof
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*as of May 5, 2015*

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