

Buckeye Harness Bulletin

September 18, 2026



Top Trio



Cleveland Darby



Don't truck with me



Mooter Tooter



Three Horses Look to Complete Ohio Triple Crown at Delaware

Story on pages 2-3

By Wes Mayberry

As Cleveland Darby crossed the finish line at Eldorado Scioto Downs on Sept. 12 to win the \$300,000 Ohio Sires Stakes Scarlet Championship for freshman filly pacers, Carl Howard had a bit of an out-of-body experience.

“I don’t normally act like that,” says Howard, of RAS Racing. “I remember doing that but don’t know why I did it.”

In a moment captured in a video posted to social media, Howard is bent over before rising to celebrate with a huge smile on his face. Cleveland Darby, a homebred for Howard, was officially an OSS champion.

“I just put my hand down for a second and thanked my dad and my father-in-law, and I just wished they were both there to see it. I said, ‘Thank you to both you guys for helping make me the man that I am,’” Howard remembers. “My dad gave me the work ethic, and my father-in-law was a lifetime restaurateur, and I made my money in the restaurant business. To breed and have a nice piece of a horse that wins an Ohio Sires Stakes championship is really special.”

RAS Racing, of Powell, Ohio, owns Cleveland Darby in partnership with Burke Racing Stable, Weaver Brusceci, and Lawrence Karr. Going off with 18-1 odds, Cleveland Darby took the lead at the top of the final stretch and held off heavy favorite Tempting Flames — who equaled the world record for a five-eighths mile track with a 1:50 mile in the fourth leg of the OSS at Scioto Downs on Aug. 18 — to win by a length in a lifetime-best 1:51. The victory was her fifth in eight seasonal starts, increasing her earnings to \$306,000. Looking back, Howard hadn’t been aligned with the bettors in seeing her as such a longshot.

“I thought she was going to have to be on her A game, but I don’t think people realized how good she’s been,” he says.

The Downbytheseaside filly out of Loreenas Ruffian made her first career start in the \$150,000 Next Generation at Scioto Downs and finished fourth. An inauspicious sixth-place finish in the first leg of the OSS followed, but she has won five of her six starts in the time since. She has been paired with driver Chris Page all season, and Howard also credits trainer Ron Burke with how well the horse has progressed.

“Ronnie has done an amazing job and kept working on

her and made some changes — last weekend was the first time that she had earplugs in,” he says.

That victory on Sept. 12 was the culmination of a story that began at the 2023 Little Brown Jug. After selling Loreenas Ruffian foal Women Layer — a 5-year-old Sweet Lou gelding with 31 career wins and \$1,025,797 in earnings — Howard decided to keep the mare’s future foals. Howard, who has missed just two Little Brown Jug races since 1981, approached Mark Weaver, of Weaver Brusceci, and Burke at the 2023 Jug to discuss partnering to own those foals. An agreement was made, and Karr joined the ownership group for Cleveland Darby in April.

The filly is now one of just three horses vying for this year’s Ohio Triple Crown. Having already won the Ohio Stake Fair Stake and OSS Scarlet Championship, she’ll look to complete the trifecta next week in the Ohio Breeders Championship at the Delaware County Fair — home of the Little Brown Jug. Howard will be there, hoping to celebrate yet another victory.

“Winning at Delaware is really special,” he says. “You get goosebumps when you’re in that winner’s circle. There’s nothing that beats that.”

Mooter Tooter

Cleveland Darby isn’t the only RAS Racing-connected horse looking to complete the Ohio Triple Crown this year. Mooter Tooter — owned by Burke Racing Stable, Knox Services, Beasty, and RAS Racing — has the same goal in mind.

This season has seen a big turnaround for the 3-year-old Long Tom filly trotter out of Moots. Winless as a freshman, she hit the board just once in seven starts and finished the year with \$17,500 in earnings. The Burke trainee won her first start as a sophomore and has gone on to post a 5-2-0 record in 13 seasonal starts, banking \$264,075. Qualifying for the OSS Scarlet Championship wasn’t always a given, however.

“She started off the year very slowly and had some breaking issues,” Howard says. “Mr. Burke goes to work on the horse and figures out something. He made a change with her shoeing, and it made a big difference, and she’s been really sharp ever since.”

Indeed, Mooter Tooter’s performances in the first two legs of the OSS were underwhelming, resulting in a pair of seventh-place finishes. But she finished first and second, respectively, in the next two legs and proceeded to add a victory in the Ohio State Fair Stake. A

fourth-place finish in the fifth leg put Mooter Tooter in third place in the OSS point standings and comfortably into the final. With the filly coming off a runner-up finish in an overnight race at Scioto Downs the week before, Howard was confident in her chances of coming out on top in the OSS Championship on Sept. 12.

“I thought the horse was really good the week before,” he says. “It was kind of a warmup mile, and she closed off the mile real strong.”

Mooter Tooter went off with 12-1 odds in the nine-horse Scarlet Championship field that also included 2025 Dan Patch Award winner and OSS 2-year-old filly trot champ Setyoursightshigh. With Yannick Gingras in the sulky, she was in seventh place and trailed leader Chip Shot by six lengths at the halfway mark but used a late surge on the far outside down the final stretch to edge Setyoursightshigh by a neck at the line in a photo finish.

“I wasn’t shocked that she won. Maybe surprised, but not shocked,” Howard says. “Yannick did a heck of a job. He got first-over cover, and he followed that cover into the stretch. We were four or five wide on the outside in the four lane and got up for the victory. These are so rare and hard to get, so any time you get one, it’s a thrill of a lifetime.”

Mooter Tooter will look to give Howard and the rest of her connections even more thrills next week in Delaware.

Don’ttruckwithme

As his name perhaps suggests, Don’ttruckwithme proved difficult to work with during his early days with trainer Daren Harvey.

“He wasn’t the barn favorite, that’s for sure,” Harvey says. “When he was out on the track, he did his job. But to put his bridle on...impossible. To put his halter on...impossible. To walk into his stall to give him water...impossible.”

Wayne Mast Jr., who owns Don’ttruckwithme with Eden Acres Farmstead and Kirk Nichols, also remembers those traits.

“He was a little ornery,” he says. “It seemed like when he hit the track, he was normally focused on what they were trying to do with him. The trouble was more in trying to get him to settle down in the barn.”

However, in the span of just a few months, the 2-year-old Catch The Fire gelded pacer out of Age Of Consent has become an OSS champion ready to complete an Ohio Triple Crown-winning season.

“He’s really evolved — the girls that take care of him have really transformed him. He’s kind of a doll baby now,” Harvey says. “He still has his moments, but he’s not the horse that first showed up.”

Don’ttruckwithme has hit the board in all eight seasonal starts with six wins and two seconds while banking \$415,960. A \$37,000 purchase at the Ohio Selected Jug Sale from breeder Judy Roegner in September 2025, he was victorious in his debut in The Next Generation as part of five straight wins to begin his career. A pair of runner-up finishes to Night Surfer in the final two legs of the OSS followed, but Don’ttruckwithme still ended as the points leader.

Night Surfer led the championship race at the first three calls before fading to third at the finish as the Mike Wilder-driven Don’ttruckwithme edged Ocean Party by a nose at the line in a track-record 1:49.4.

“He put in an incredible effort — that was tight,” Harvey said during a post-race interview.

Harvey was happy to have Wilder in the sulky that night but gave plenty of credit to the horse’s regular driver, Chris Lems, who was unavailable due to injury.

“Chris Lems got this horse ready for tonight,” he said and then previewed what was next.

“Just the Breeders at Delaware, and hopefully we’ll wrap up and get him ready for next year,” he said.



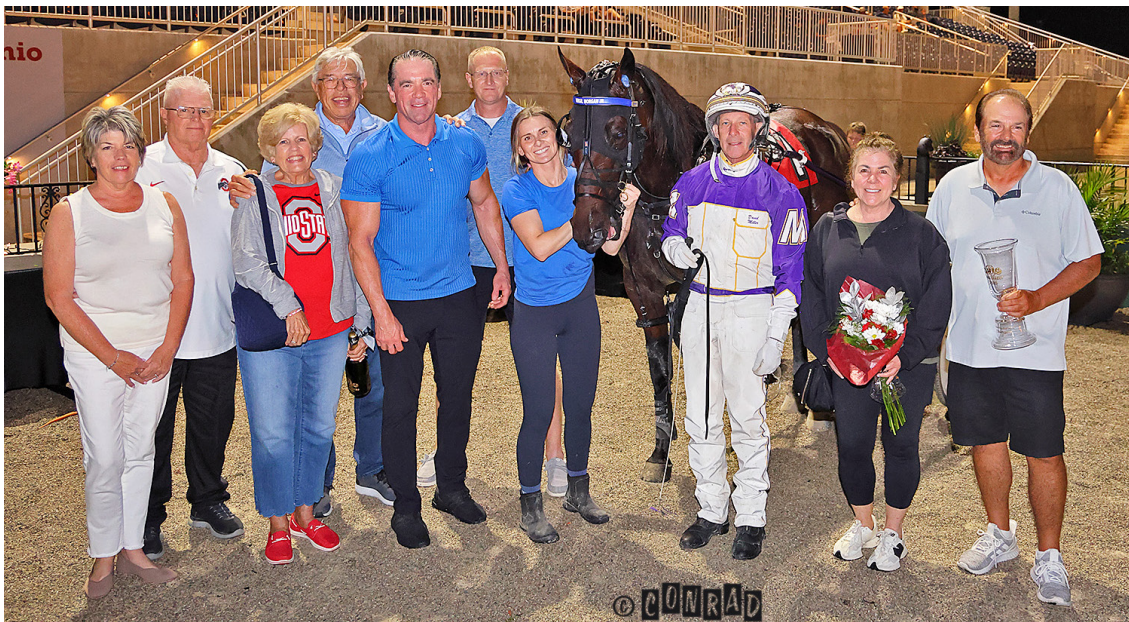
2026 Ohio Sires Stakes Champions - 3YO Colts

3-Year-Old Colt Trot - Big Ranger



Breeder: Spring Haven Farm **Owner:** Madison Global **Trainer:** Anette Lorentzon
Driver: Tim Tetrick

3-Year-Old Colt Pace - Tsunami Seas



Breeders: Country Club Acres, L&H Management Services **Owners:** Jeffrey Rector, Larry Wills, Hutchison Harness **Trainer:** Virgil Morgan Jr. **Driver:** David Miller

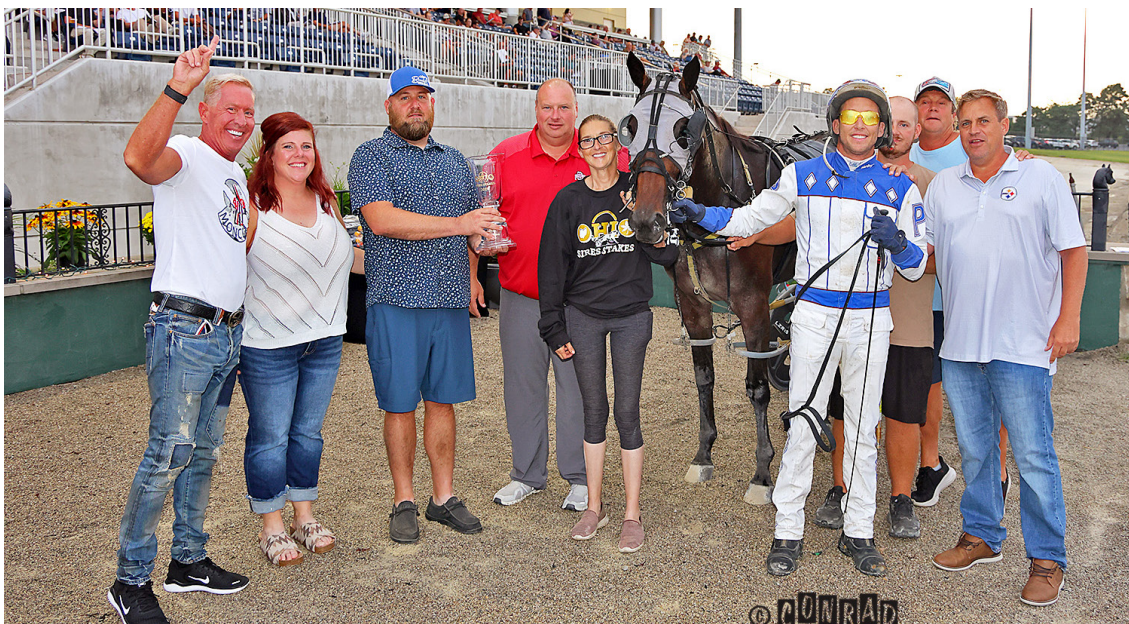
2026 Ohio Sires Stakes Champions - 3YO Fillies

3-Year-Old Filly Trot - Mooter Tooter



Breeder: Wayne Weaver **Owners:** Burke Racing Stable, Knox Services, Beasty, RAS Racing **Trainer:** Ron Burke **Driver:** Yannick Gingras

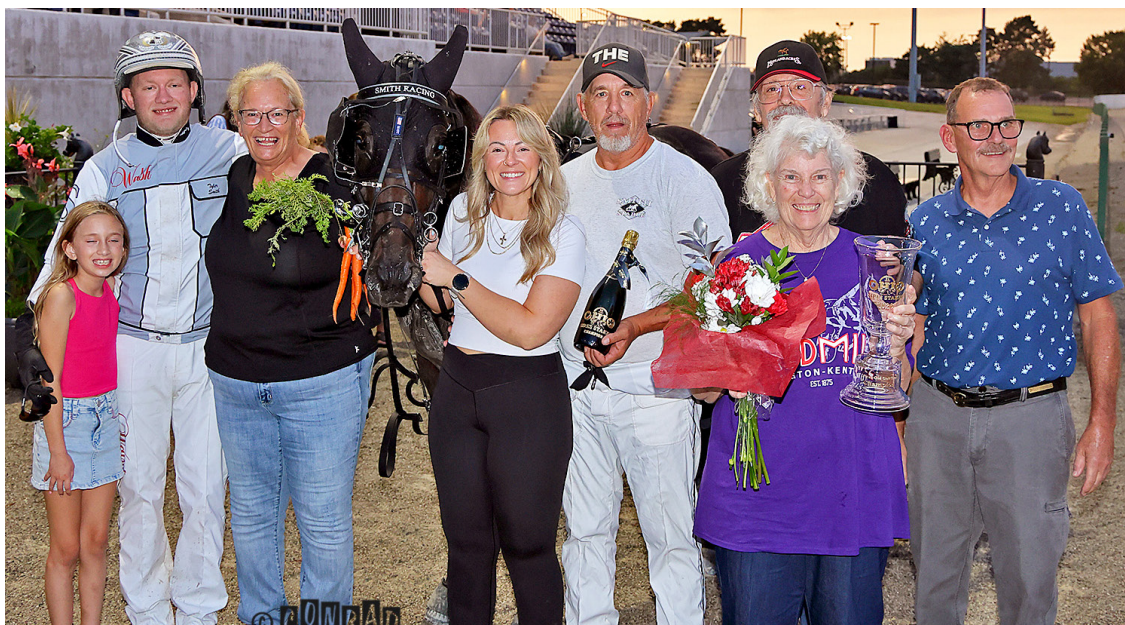
3-Year-Old Filly Pace - Seaside Shuffle



Breeders: Billy Walters, Joseph McLead **Owners:** Burke Racing Stable, Weaver Brusceci, Knox Services, RAS Racing **Trainer:** Ron Burke **Driver:** Chris Page

2026 Ohio Sires Stakes Champions - 2YO Colts

2-Year-Old Colt Trot - Cool Julio



Breeder: Double Spring Farm **Owner:** Tdtrot LLC **Trainer:** Jeff Smith **Driver:** Tyler Smith

2-Year-Old Colt Pace - Don'ttruckwithme



Breeder: Judy Roegner **Owners:** Wayne Mast Jr., Eden Acres Farmstead, Kirk Nichols
Trainer: Daren Harvey **Driver:** Mike Wilder

2026 Ohio Sires Stakes Champions - 2YO Fillies

2-Year-Old Filly Trot - Blue Ranger



Breeder: Spring Haven Farm **Owner:** Bender Sweden Inc. **Trainer:** Marcus Melander
Driver: Aaron Merriman

2-Year-Old Filly Pace - Cleveland Darby



Breeder: Carl Howard **Owners:** Burke Racing Stable, Weaver Brusceci, RAS Racing,
Lawrence Karr **Trainer:** Ron Burke **Driver:** Chris Page

Congratulations!

Luke Ebersole - \$10 million career driver earnings



Luke Ebersole surpassed \$10 million in career driver earnings on Sept. 7, doing so with a second-place finish with Barley A Lie at Eldorado Scioto Downs. The 36-year-old resident of Chesterville, Ohio, began his driving career in 2007 and had 1,052 wins in 14,550 starts as of Sept. 15.



Don't miss the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association coverage of

LITTLE BROWN JUG WEEK

5 Days in Delaware Sept. 20-24



HarnessRacingOhio.com

2026 New All-Age Track Records at Ohio Fairs

Pacing

Circleville - Burnout, 1:56
Bellefontaine - Gypsy's Brother, 1:56.1
Mount Vernon - Gypsy's Brother, 1:55.2
Marysville - Fired Up Henry L, 1:54.3
Sidney - Ants Marching, 1:56
Athens - Gc's Legend, 1:56.1
Celina - Ants Marching, 1:52.3
Zanesville - Hunka Hunka, 1:56
Napoleon - Woodrow Blue Chip, 1:56.3
Lima - Carbine, 1:54.3
Woodsfield - Gc's Legend, 1:55
Canton - Stoke The Fire, 1:57
Findlay - Carbine, 1:55.1
Canfield - Charlie May, 1:53.1
Kenton - Heerzadiamondstud, 1:55.4

Trotting

Bucyrus - Lynn Range, 1:58
Athens - Out Of Range, 1:59
Berea - Where Theres Smoke, 1:59.4
Napoleon - Macmorris Hanover, 1:59.3
Wellington - Macmorris Hanover, 1:58
Woodsfield - Out Of Range, 1:59
Findlay - Jefferson Hanover, 1:58.2
Marietta - Lady Lena, 2:00.1
Wauseon - Macmorris Hanover, 1:56.2
Kenton - Tango L, 1:57

Ohio Fair Racing - Upcoming Schedule

Dates and start times subject to change

Sunday, Sept. 20

Delaware County Fair (Delaware, OH), 1 p.m.

Monday, Sept. 21

Delaware County Fair (Delaware, OH), 1 p.m.

Ashland County Fair (Ashland, OH), 12 p.m. & 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 22

Delaware County Fair (Delaware, OH), 1 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 23

Delaware County Fair (Delaware, OH), 11 a.m.

Thursday, Sept. 24

Delaware County Fair (Delaware, OH), 11 a.m.

Friday, Sept. 25

Tuscarawas County Fair (Dover, OH), 11 a.m.

Saturday, Sept. 26

Tuscarawas County Fair (Dover, OH), 11 a.m.

Monday, Oct. 5

Montgomery County Fair (Dayton Raceway), 2/4 p.m.

Coshocton County Fair (Coshocton, OH), 4 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 6

Coshocton County Fair (Coshocton, OH), 12 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 10

Ohio Fairs Championships (Northfield Park), 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 14

Fairfield County Fair (Lancaster, OH), 1 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 15

Fairfield County Fair (Lancaster, OH), 1:30 p.m.