

# PACESETTER

The Official Newsletter of the Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of NJ

## NJ APPROPRIATIONS RESTORED

The Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey is thrilled to announce the full restoration of the \$20 million horse racing purse supplement in the FY2026 state budget – a major win for harness racing and the entire equine industry in New Jersey.

This annual funding, split evenly between Standardbreds and Thoroughbreds (\$10 million each), is part of a second five-year, \$100 million reauthorization of the purse supplement program first established by the Governor and Legislature in 2018. The program was reauthorized shortly after the initial five-year period concluded in 2023.

“This is a massive win for harness racing in New Jersey,” said Mark Ford, president of the SBOANJ.

“Restoring the full \$20 million purse supplement reaffirms the state’s long-standing commitment to the horse racing industry—an industry that supports thousands of jobs, protects open space, and generates millions in tax revenue. This funding is more than a line item; it’s an investment in our farms, our breeders, our trainers, our fans, and the future of racing in New Jersey.”

The purse supplement has proven to be a strategic lifeline, allowing New Jersey to compete with neighboring states that heavily subsidize racing through casino revenues. It supports a stronger stakes program, a more robust breeding industry, and helps position New Jersey as a premier destination to breed, train, and race horses.

The Meadowlands Racetrack, recognized as one of the top harness racing venues in the world, has been a direct beneficiary of these continued investments, ensuring that New Jersey remains the gold standard in Standardbred racing for generations to come.

New Jersey’s horse racing sector contributes tens of millions of dollars annually in direct tax revenues and generates hundreds of millions more in spin off economic activity while preserving thousands of acres of farmland and open space across the state.

The SBOANJ extends its sincere thanks to the Governor and members of the New Jersey Legislature for their continued support and belief in the importance and economic value of the racing industry.

“This victory keeps the momentum going,” added Ford. “We’re grateful – and we’re just getting started.”



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# STATE ASSEMBLY SPEAKER COUGHLIN VISITS FAIR WINDS FARM

New Jersey State Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin visited Fair Winds Farm this past spring, where he met with members of the Standardbred community regarding the state's annual appropriation for horse racing purses in the fiscal year 2026 budget.

An original budget proposal included a \$10 million reduction to the appropriation, but the Legislature last month approved a spending bill that restored the funding to its original \$20 million. Gov. Phil Murphy signed the budget on June 30.

An economic impact study last year, completed with assistance from the SBOANJ, showed horse racing generated \$75 million annually in tax revenue for New Jersey.

Speaker Coughlin's visit to Fair Winds Farm, which included a lunch reception and fundraiser, was hosted by the Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey and the state's Standardbred industry's political action committee TrotPAC.

Among those joining Speaker Coughlin for Monday's event were SBOANJ President Mark Ford as well as fellow officers Mark Mullen, Linda Toscano, and Al Ochsner. The group also included SBOANJ directors Dan Baer, Stephen Dey III, Mike Gulotta, Julie Meirs, Julie Miller, and Chris Ryder. Other industry representatives included John Campbell, Gunjan Patel and Nadia Tarnawa from the Hambletonian Society, Jason Settlemoir

from The Meadowlands, and Karyn Malinowski from the Rutgers Equine Science Center.

At the conclusion of the visit, Speaker Coughlin took a trip to



Fair Winds' nearby yearling farm to catch up with his Andy Miller Stable-bred namesake, trotter Speaker Craig, and watch the horse with other yearlings in the field. Fair Winds Farm's Heather Zitone and Julie Miller provided Speaker Coughlin with additional insight about how young horses are raised.

A Democrat representing the 19th Legislative District in Middlesex County, Speaker Coughlin has served in the State Assembly since 2010. Speaker Coughlin's responsibilities include scheduling meetings and determining which bills will be considered within the Assembly.

# SBOANJ STAKES RACES RESCHEDULED

SBOANJ sponsored stakes races have been rescheduled due to preseason NFL football games.

Live racing at the Meadowlands will be cancelled on Saturday, August 16 and Friday, August 22, resulting in the following schedule changes.

The 2-year-old Home Grown Pace #8 will be moved from Saturday August 9th to Friday August 8th.

The 2-year-old Garden State Trot #8 will be moved from Saturday August 16th to Friday August 15th.

Please be aware of these changes and the resulting change to draw dates. The draw days will be on Monday instead of Tuesday.

If you have any further questions please contact the SBOANJ office at 732-462-2357.

# DALEY SWEEPS NJSS FOR 3YO PACERS

Noel Daley swept the \$225,000 New Jersey Sire Stakes finals for 3-year-old pacers, capturing the event for colts and geldings with Smooth Dream and the filly's division with Worklifebalance on May 24 at The Meadowlands.



Smooth Dream (Cattlewash-Dreamlands Latte) was a 1:50.3 winner as he defeated Manolete by a neck. Making History finished third. Smooth Dream and driver Todd McCarthy also won both NJSS preliminary starts on their way to the title.

“My horse has been super since he’s come back this year,” McCarthy said. “I give all credit to Noel. He’s done a great job with him.”

## NJSS 3YO TROT WINNERS

Three-year-old trotters were in the New Jersey Sire Stakes spotlight at The Meadowlands on June 13, with Ron Burke-trained Hidalgo winning the \$225,000 series final for colts and geldings and Juan Cano-trained Conversano taking home the \$225,000 division for fillies.



Hidalgo (Muscle Hill-Brooklyn) and driver Yannick Gingras captured their championship by one length over Onajetplane and Top Gun Hanover, who dead-heated for second. The winning time was 1:52.4 as Hidalgo led the way from start to finish.

“It was the last place I wanted to be,” Gingras said. “He’s been there

Smooth Dream moved to Daley’s barn this year. Entering July, the gelding was 7-for-7 this season, with his other victories including the \$50,000 Home Grown Pace in April and \$48,000 New Jersey Standardbred Development Fund final in June.

“You’re learning about him just like I’m learning about him,” Daley said after the NJSS final.

Bred by Winbak Farm, Smooth Dream is owned by Bay Pond Racing Stable, CTC Stable and KDP Stable.

Worklifebalance triumphed by a nose over Beach Babe in 1:51.4 with Andy McCarthy in the sulky. Reckless Abandon, the 2024 NJSS champion, finished third.

“She dug down deep by the wire,” winning driver McCarthy said. “I was proud of her.”

Bred by Bill Donovan and raised at Concord Stud Farm in Cream Ridge, N.J., Worklifebalance (Cattlewash-Ubettergo Go) was owned at the time of the NJSS final by CTC Stable, KDP Stable and Manklin Creek LLC. Since mid-June, she has been owned by KDP Stable and Daley.

before and got beat. I really wanted to get away in the two- or three-hole. At the end of the day, he dug in and got the job done.”

Bred by Order By Stable AB, Hidalgo is owned by Brixton Medical Inc. and Hatfield Stables. He was a head from being undefeated in his three NJSS starts.

Conversano (Muscle Hill-Celebrity Ruth) was a 1:52.3 winner for driver Andy McCarthy. Torrisi finished second, one-length back, and What A Bid Hanover was third.

It was Conversano’s fourth victory in five races (her setback was a second-place finish behind defending Dan Patch Award winner Champagne Problems in an NJSS prelim), with the triumphs also including the Garden State Trot in mid-May.

“I knew I had a nice horse going into the Garden State,” Cano said. “She was nice at 2 but she wasn’t mature. She needed time.”

Conversano was bred by Joseph Parisi and races for his Hot Lead Farm, located near Allentown, N.J.



# SBOANJ'S GARDEN STATE TROT WINNERS

Four divisions of the SBOANJ-sponsored Garden State Trot, two each for male and female 3-year-olds, were contested May 17 at The Meadowlands, with the events going for purses increased over original estimates.

Yannick G Kemp and Mr Walner Fashion won the divisions for the boys while Conversano and Yo Tillie won the splits for the fillies.



Driven by Todd McCarthy and trained by Nifty Norman, Yannick G Kemp (Walner-Southwind Adele) won the nine-horse \$60,000 division for the colts and geldings by 2-1/2 lengths over Travolta Hanover in 1:53.3. Te Quiero Lindy finished third. The colt is owned by Melvin Hartman, Rojan Stables and Little E LLC. He was bred by Kemppi Stables Oy and Suojalampi Stable.



Mr Walner Fashion (Walner-Cooler Schooner) captured the eight-horse \$55,000 division for the colts and geldings by 1-1/2 lengths over Grande Via in 1:53. Flightline was third. McCarthy drove the gelding for trainer Jim Campbell and breeder/owner Fashion Farms.

With an added number of entries, the purse was increased

from the original advertised amount of \$60,000 for one division.



Yo Tillie (Tactical Landing-Consolidator) won the faster of the two \$40,000 divisions for the fillies, stopping the timer in 1:52.3 as she defeated Spicy Nice by 3-3/4 lengths. Get It All and Dominant Fashion dead-heated for third. McCarthy piloted the winner for trainer Andrew Harris and owners Bill Pollock, Bruce Areman and Harris. She was bred by GBW Breeding Farms and Black Creek Farm.



Conversano (Muscle Hill-Celebrity Ruth) won her division in 1:53 by a neck over Kendra, with Truly Authentic finishing third. Andy McCarthy drove Conversano for trainer Juan Cano and breeder/owner Joseph Parisi/Hot Lead Farm.

The purse for the fillies increased \$20,000 from the original estimate of \$60,000 for one division. The purse increases were supported by additional money received from the New Jersey state appropriation.

The SBOANJ is grateful for the increased participation in this year's Garden State Trot and looks forward to continued involvement in future SBOANJ sponsored races.



# NEW JERSEY MAKES THE GRADE IN STAKES ACTION

Of this year's first seven Grade 1 stakes, six were won by horses with some connection to New Jersey.



Leading the way was Louprint, who captured the million-dollar North America Cup at Woodbine Mohawk Park on June 14. The 3-year-old pacing colt is co-owned by Randolph's Larry Karr and trained by Ron Burke, who is stabled at Gaitway Farm in Manalapan.



Madden Oaks was declared the winner of the \$656,000 Meadowlands Pace on July 12 at The Meadowlands. The 3-year-old pacing colt is co-owned by Franklin Lakes' Paul Kautz and trained by Clarksburg's Cameron Capone. His breeders include Millburn's South Mountain Stables and Cranbury's Mark Mullen. In addition, Madden Oaks was second in the North America Cup.

Aardie B Miki N won the \$490,000 Blue Chip Matchmaker Series final on May 9 at Yonkers Raceway. The pacing mare is trained by Wrightstown's Per Engblom.



Elista Hanover won the \$425,000 Hambletonian Maturity on July 12 at The Meadowlands. The trotting mare is co-owned and trained by New Egypt's Annie Stoebe.



Miki And Minnie won the \$390,000 Fan Hanover Stakes on June 14 at Woodbine Mohawk Park for Chesterfield-based trainer Chris Ryder, an Allentown resident.



Ryder also trains and co-owns Twin B Joe Fresh, who won the \$287,000 Roses Are Red Stakes on June 14 at Mohawk. Sharing in the ownership is driver Dexter Dunn, who resides in Millstone, and Bordentown's Peter Trebotica.

# THE SBOANJ'S 29TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

This year's SBOANJ's golf outing was one for the books. The weather could not have been any better, the participants were able to enjoy a gorgeous day of golf!

At the conclusion of the tournament, all the golfers returned to the clubhouse to wind down during the cocktail hour, after dinner the real fun began. Our MC's Al Ochsner, Julie Miller and James Witherite announced the prize winners and auctioned off some amazing items.

The golfers participated in an 18-hole scramble, which included a number of prize winning competitions. Quality Chevrolet sponsored the hole-in-one, offering up a 2025 Chevy Pickup. The women's longest drive award went to Marjorie Roman this year, with Mike Pasch taking it for the men. Shannon Murphy won the closest-to-the-pin competition for the men and Dr. Patty Hogan won for the women. The most honest foursome was Per Engblom's group, which won a free foursome from Knob Hill, hopefully to improve their skills for next year. This year's tournament ended in a dead heat for first place. The two winning foursomes were Scott Blackler, Keelan MacDonald, Scott Zeron, Phil Magee and Andy



The closet-to-the-pin for men winner.



The Most Honest Foursome winners.

Miller, Nelson Hersberger, Bert Hochsprung, Kevin Schmitt.

Vinny Ginsburg took home the LZR Wheels donated by Michael Hitchcock. This year, Tom and AnnMarie Pontone outbid everyone for the Pizza Oven and Linz steak package. Tim Hundertpfund took home the Yankees



Team Miller Stable Winning Foursome.

Experience package generously donated by Joe Lee Tyler Miller was the lucky winner of the Steve Miller Band event package donated by Tom and AnnMarie Pontone. Thank you to all the live auction prize winners we appreciate your support.

Special thanks to all of the gracious sponsors of the event. Especially to our platinum sponsors: The Napp-Grecco Company, AG-U, Burke Racing Stable, Gaitway Farm Inc., Team Miller Stable, and UMH Properties Inc. All proceeds from the event benefit TrotPAC and the Horsemen's Benevolent Fund.

At the end of the day, the event was a huge success both on and off the golf course. Big thanks to the golf committee, office staff, and volunteers that came out to support and help put together another successful event. We cannot wait to see you all again next year.

Visit [sboanj.com](http://sboanj.com) to view more photos.

## Trot PAC

TrotPAC trustees continue to fundraisers during these un-long-term viability of Standard-Jersey. With the recent changes in Legis-

TrotPAC make its presence known in Trenton. TrotPAC trustees must now educate and promote the importance of our industry to all the State Legislators. Most recently TrotPAC trustees attended the events for the following people: Ellen Park for Assembly, Assemblywoman Andrea Katz, Assemblyman Gary S. Schaer, John DiMaio for Assembly, Jim Beach for Senate, Roy Freiman for Assembly, Lisa Swain for State Assembly, Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald, Vin Gopal for Senate, Joseph Lagana for Senate, and Margie Donlon M.D. for Assembly.

attend many political leaders' certain times to help ensure the bred racing and breeding in New lators it is more important than ever that



# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I would like to start by sending a huge thank you to the TrotPAC trustees. Without their relentless efforts we would not be celebrating the full restoration of the \$20 million horse racing supplement from the state. I would also like to thank all those who have donated to TrotPAC, and encourage those who have to continue, and those who have not to please do so. It is clear that the future of our industry relies heavily on the appropriations and the continued efforts from TrotPAC and our political representation from AMG.

With the state appropriations fully restored, the Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey and New Meadowlands Racetrack (NMRLLC) were able to finalize a new Standardbred Racing Agreement governing racing operations at the Meadowlands Racetrack.

This agreement marks an important step forward in protecting the interests of horsemen and horsewomen, maintaining the integrity of our industry, and preserving the Meadowlands as a premier venue for Standardbred racing. It reflects our shared commitment to stable, competitive purses, clear statutory rights, and responsible growth.

Key provisions of the agreement include an expanded racing schedule, a total of 102 race dates are set for 2025, adding dates to fill the gap left by Freehold Raceway. We will be meeting in September to determine additional Freehold race dates for 2026.

Annual health fund contributions will total \$700,000, supplemented by a 40% track share of ADW revenues and a matching contribution by NMRLLC to account for lost Freehold funding. NMRLLC has also committed to offset the recent increase in New Jersey's sports wagering tax, pledging to supplement the Standardbred purse account each month in an amount equal to the actual shortfall created by the tax hike, estimated at \$450,000 to \$500,000 annually. There will be continued support for New Jersey breeding and racing, including daily NJ-owned/sired races, bonuses for NJ-sired horses in overnights, and \$800,000 annually in Sire Stakes funding.

We appreciate the collaboration shown by the Meadowlands team and our Contract Committee members in achieving this result. We thank Jeff Gural for his ongoing leadership and his personal commitment to the long-term success of Standardbred racing in New Jersey. His willingness to stand behind the industry with meaningful financial support, including the full make-whole on the sports wagering tax, is deeply appreciated.

We are grateful to have this agreement in place to maintain these important services for our horsemen. We look forward to working together with Jeff to hopefully help him secure a casino license for the Meadowlands.

*Mark Ford*



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