

PACESETTER

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

NEW JERSEY PROMINENT SHOWING AT LEXINGTON YEARLING SALE

For the second year in a row, New Jersey-eligible yearlings sold for more than \$20 million at the annual Lexington Selected Yearling Sale in Kentucky.

This year, New Jersey-eligible yearlings brought a total of \$20.46 million at the recently concluded five-day event at the Fasig-Tipton Pavilion in Lexington. The gross was an increase over last year's total of \$20.27 million.

Trotting stallion Walner, who stands at Southwind Farms, was the sale's top-grossing sire, at nearly \$10.5 million. He also led in average, at \$131,188, for 80 yearlings.

Walner sired the sale's two highest purchases, both fillies: Dejeuner for \$1 million, and Turtle Dove for \$900,000. Dejeuner became the highest-priced yearling filly ever sold at auction, bettering the previous record of \$925,000 for Rani Hanover (also sired by Walner) in 2024. Only three other yearlings, all colts, have ever sold for at least \$1 million.

In addition, five other New Jersey-eligibles were among the Top 10 sellers: Valorous (by Alrajah One IT), Social Hour (Walner), Temple OfTrot (Walner), Umbria (Tactical Landing) and Temperamental (Muscle Hill).

Muscle Hill ranked third in gross among all sires at the sale, with 37 yearlings totaling \$4.14 million, and his average of \$111,973 also was third. Tactical Landing was fifth in gross among trotting sires, with 40 yearlings totaling \$3.17 million. Both stallions stand at Southwind Farms.

Overall, New Jersey-eligible yearlings averaged \$94,327. The average for all yearlings in the entire sale was \$68,417.

Buyers from New Jersey spent \$21.4 million at the Lexington sale, by far the top total at the event.



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NJSS CHAMPS WIN HAMBLETONIAN, OAKS AT THE BIG M

Nordic Catcher S, a New Jersey Sire Stakes champion in 2024, this year captured the biggest prize in trotting – the 100th edition of the Grade 1 Hambletonian Stakes – on Aug. 2 at The Meadowlands for trainer-driver Ake Svanstedt.



Svanstedt, who is based in Wrightstown, won the \$1 million Hambletonian for the third time in nine years and became only the sixth person in the event's century-long history to be the trainer and driver of at least winners. In addition to his work in the sulky with Nordic Catcher S, Ake Svanstedt Inc. co-owns the 3-year-old son of Six Pack-That Woman Hanover with Meadowlands Chairman and CEO Jeff Gural's Little E LLC.

Nordic Catcher S won America's Trotting Classic in a stakes-record 1:50. The previous stakes record of 1:50.1 was set by colt

Muscle Hill in 2009 and equaled by filly Ramona Hill in 2020. "It's a great win, for it to be historical, in the 100th Hambletonian," Svanstedt said after the race. "[Nordic Catcher S] has raced better and better each race, and his form was absolutely on top today. Everything was perfect."

Nordic Catcher S was bred by Sweden's Nordic Horse Farm AB and New Jersey's Joie De Vie Farm, located in Jobstown.

Earlier in the afternoon, the \$500,000 Grade 1 Hambletonian Oaks, for 3-year-old female trotters, was won by the New Jersey-connected Conversano in 1:51.2 with James MacDonald in the sulky. A New Jersey Sire Stakes champion this past June, Conversano was bred by Joseph Parisi and is campaigned by his Hot Lead Farm, located near Imlaystown in Upper Freehold Township.

The homebred daughter of Muscle Hill-Celebrity Ruth is trained by Juan Cano, who resides in Cream Ridge.

"I've never been happier than I am right now," said Cano, who started his own stable in 2019. "I never dreamed this would be my life. I don't have words to say. I just say thank God and thank the owner for giving me the opportunity."

2025-2026 NEW JERSEY INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

The SBOANJ is proud to announce the 2025 - 2026 New Jersey Incentive Programs. The Incentive Programs include breeders awards, New Jersey sired owner awards, and the Resident Mare Rebates.

The New Jersey breeder awards pay 12% of the purse amount earned by each New Jersey Sired horse in division and finals of designated NJ races. The award amounts are determined each year based on the number of horses raced. The following races are included in the program: NJSS Renaissance Pace, NJSS Premier Races, NJSS Development Fund Races, SBOANJ Garden State Trot, SBOANJ Home Grown Pace, New Jersey Classic.

New Jersey owners awards are payments to New Jersey Sired

horses racing in overnight events at the Meadowlands racetrack. The owner of a New Jersey sired horse who is 6-year-old or under will be paid a monetary amount based on finish; 1st \$1,000, 2nd \$900, 3rd \$800, 4th \$700 and 5th \$600.

The Resident Mare Rebates are a \$1,000 rebate paid to the first owner of record of a mare who has resided in New Jersey for 150 days, up to and including foaling.

The SBOANJ oversees all three of these programs, therefore a SBOANJ membership and W9 form are required for payments. Rebates are subject to change based on available funding. For more information visit the www.sboanj.com or call the office 732-462-2357.

FRESHMEN SHINE IN HOME GROWN PACE, GARDEN STATE TROT

Pa Perfect and Everlast Sting Deo, both sired by Perfect Sting, won their respective divisions of the Home Grown Pace on Aug. 8 at The Meadowlands.



In the \$50,000 event for 2-year-old female pacers, Pa Perfect posted a 1:53.3 victory for trainer Christopher Choate, of Mount Laurel, and driver Corey Callahan. Car Keys was second and Ladysassin finished third.

Pa Perfect, out of the mare Captain's Muse, is owned by Sparta's Son Of A Beach Racing, Keyport's Albert Zullo and Craig Smith. She was bred by Riverview Breeding, Steven Head and Larry Denley.

In the \$48,000 event for 2-year-old male pacers, Everlast Sting



Deo won in 1:52 for driver Braxten Boyd and trainer Travis Alexander. Bookie J was second and Callmebigpapi finished third.

Everlast Sting Deo, out of the mare Little Miss K, was bred by Flemington's Deo Volente Farms and is owned by Morrison Racing Stables.

One week later at The Meadowlands, Emmas Mystery CCL, Sparks and Rambo Hanover won their respective divisions of the Garden State Trot for 2-year-olds.

Emmas Mystery CCL captured the \$50,000 first division of the event for female trotters for driver Andrew McCarthy and trainer Noel Daley, based at Magical Acres in Chesterfield. Lipstick finished second and Abbey Blue Chip was third.



A daughter of Muscle Hill-Mystery Woman, Emmas Mystery CCL was bred by Laura Young (Pennington) and is owned by Winning Key Inc.



Sparks, trained and driven by Ake Svanstedt, won the \$50,500 second division for the fillies in 1:55.3, with Diamond Bay finishing second and No Promises third.

Wrightstown's Ake Svanstedt Inc. shares ownership of Sparks with Journey Horses Inc., Graham Grace Stables, and Joe Sbrocco & JAF Racing. The daughter of Walner-Sheer Energy was bred by Cream Ridge's Fair Winds Farm and Bellevue Farms.



In the \$75,000 event for colts and geldings, Rambo Hanover was another winner for trainer-driver Svanstedt. Kingmen was second and Southwind Alamo finished third.

The son of Muscle Hill-Riding High is owned by Ake Svanstedt Inc., Brochart Stable, and Al Libfeld. He was bred by Hanover Shoe Farms.

NJ CLASSIC CHAMPS CROWNED

Apex, Lipstick, Camera Man, and Yo Tillie were the winners of the \$250,000 New Jersey Classic finals for trotters, held Sept. 5 at The Meadowlands.



Trained by Marcus Melander, Apex won the 2-year-old final for colts and geldings in 1:52.2 with Dexter Dunn in the sulky for owners Jeff Snyder, SRF Stable and Steve Stewart. The son of Walner-Mission Brief was bred by Mission Brief Stable. Captain Jordan finished second and Southwind Alamo was third.



Lipstick, trained by Anette Lorentzon and driven by David Miller, won the 2-year-old final for fillies in 1:54 for owners Anvil And Lace Farm and Girlz Just Wanna Have Fun. The daughter of Tactical Landing-Non Stick was bred by Wrightstown's Ake Svanstedt Inc. and Little E LLC. Southwind Chaska was second and Days Away finished third.

Camera Man was second-placed-first in the final for 3-year-old males. Driven by Jason Bartlett and trained by Bruce Saunders, the son of Six Pack-Cameron Hill is owned by Randy Zane and was bred by Glengate Farms. Mountcastle was placed second for going off gait and Go Ahead Makemyday was third.

Yo Tillie won the final for 3-year-old fillies in 1:50.2 for driver Todd McCarthy and trainer Andrew Harris. The daughter of Tactical Landing-Consolidator is owned by Freehold residents Bill Pollock and Bruce Aremen, as well as Allentown's Harris. She was bred by GBW Breeding Farms and Black Creek Farm. Champagne Problems was second and Walspea was third.



In the \$100,000 consolations for the trotters, the winners were 2-year-old gelding Nix Nacken (Muscle Hill-Nixie Volo) for driver Scott Zeron and trainer Marcus Melander, 2-year-old filly R Candy for driver Dexter Dunn and trainer Linda Toscano, 3-year-old gelding Durante Hanover (Walner-Dancing For Money) for driver Andrew McCarthy and trainer Noel Daley and 3-year-old filly Delaney Hanover (Muscle Hill-Danielle Hanover) for Zeron and trainer Lucas Wallin.

The \$150,000 New Jersey Classic pacing finals also were contested Sept. 5 at The Big M. Winners were Bookie J, Perfect Thought, Papis Pistol, and Worklifebalance.

Bookie J, a son of Perfect Sting-Skyy, captured the final for 2-year-old colts and geldings in 1:51.1 for driver Dexter Dunn and trainer Chris Ryder. He is owned by Ken Jacobs and was bred by Yankeeland Partners. Hunting Glory was second and Callmebigpapi was third.

Perfect Thought won the final for 2-year-old fillies in 1:51.1 with Scott Zeron driving for trainer Megan Scran. The daughter of Perfect Sting-Think Pink is owned by Thestable Perfect Thought and was bred by Jon Brinkerhoff, Frank R. Brinkerhoff, Frank B. Brinkerhoff, and Michael Moss. Car Keys finished second and Pa Perfect was third.

Papis Pistol won the final for 3-year-old colts and geldings in 1:47.4, with Jason Bartlett in the sulky for trainer Sam DePinto. The son of Papi Rob Hanover-Bang Bang is owned by Spring Lake's Shannon DePinto, Manalapan's Chris Arvenitis, Asbury Park's Anthony Perretti, and Brad Shackman. The colt was bred by Anthony Perretti Farm, Shackman, and Clarksburg's Joseph Davino. Captain Optimistic was second and Manolete was third.

The final for 3-year-old fillies was won by Worklifebalance in 1:49.4. Andrew McCarthy drove the daughter of Cattlewash-Ubettergo Go for trainer Noel Daley. The filly is owned by KDP Stable and Chesterfield's Daley. She was bred by WJ Donovan. Asphalt finished second and Shesgotthejack was third.

BREEDERS CROWN AND RECENT GRADE 1 WINNERS

A dozen Grade 1 Breeders Crown finals were held at Woodbine Mohawk Park the weekend of Oct. 24-25, and New Jersey-connected horses brought home a number of the trophies.

New Egypt-based trainer Marcus Melander won two finals, with Spencer Hanover in the \$700,000 Breeders Crown for 2-year-old



(New Image Media)

male trotters and with Meshuggah in the \$600,000 championship for 3-year-old male trotters (over stablemate Super Chapter). Spencer Hanover's owners include New Jersey's Arthur Pronti. Melander has now won seven Breeders Crowns in his career.



Andrew Harris, who is stabled at Gaitway Farm in Manalapan, won his first Breeders Crown with Yo Tillie, driven by Todd McCarthy, in the \$664,500 final for 3-year-old female trotters. In addition to training Yo Tillie, Harris shares ownership of the filly with New Jersey's Bill Pollock and Bruce Areman. Yo Tillie is a daughter of stallion Tactical Landing, who stands at Pennington's Southwind Farms.

Wrightstown's Ake Svanstedt picked up the 12th Breeders Crown trophy of his training career with Warrawee Michelle in the \$400,000 Mare Trot. Svanstedt also drove and co-owns the daughter of Southwind Farms-based stallion Walner.

Nancy Takter, based in East Windsor, also captured her 12th Breeders Crown, with French Wine in the \$600,000 Open Trot. Takter and Svanstedt are tied for sixth in wins among all trainers in Breeders Crown history.

Chris Ryder, based at Winners Training Center in Chesterfield, won his ninth Breeders Crown when Miki And Minnie finished in a dead heat for first in the final for 3-year-old female pacers. She



was driven by Dexter Dunn.

Ron Burke, who has a stable at Gaitway Farm in Manalapan, also won two finals, with Loua Dipa in the \$700,000 Breeders Crown for 2-year-old female pacers and with Sippinonsearoc, driven by Yannick Gingras, in the \$600,000 event for 3-year-old male pacers. Burke has won 24 Breeders Crowns, the second most among all trainers in history.

Other notable Grade 1 wins in recent months included:



Lexus Kody in the \$1 million MGM Yonkers International Trot and \$459,900 Maple Leaf Trot for trainer Ron Burke and driver Yannick Gingras.

Apex in the Mohawk Million and \$368,950 Peter Haughton Memorial for trainer Marcus Melander and stallion Walner.

Maximus Miki in the \$503,700 Canadian Pacing Derby for Magical Acres trainer Tom Cancelliere and owner John Cancelliere. Louprint in the \$500,000 Little Brown Jug for Burke and New Jersey's Larry Karr.

Atlantic Summer in the \$464,400 Jim Doherty Memorial for Burke and Karr.

Ardonne in the \$349,200 William Wellwood Memorial for stallion Tactical Landing.

Delaney Hanover in the \$300,000 Kentucky Filly Futurity for New Egypt-based trainer Lucas Wallin, New Jersey's Shermay Stables and Wallin Racing Stable, and stallion Muscle Hill.

DEO VOLENTE FARMS TO STAND CAPTAIN OPTIMISTIC IN 2026

Captain Optimistic, winner of such prestigious races as the Governor's Cup, Triple Crown leg Cane Pace and the Bluegrass Stake, will join the stallion ranks of Deo Volente Farms in 2026!

Captain Optimistic will be the first son of Captaintreacherous to stand in New Jersey and is extremely well bred on both his paternal and maternal lines. He is out of the stakes winning mare, Cinamony (by Art Official), who has a mark of 1:49.3F, earnings of \$532,404 and is the sister of \$1.5 million winning Fear The Dragon. Cinamony's 2nd dam is Mattaroni, P, 3, 1:52.3M, \$744,481.

Throughout his racing career, Captain Optimistic campaigned at the highest levels and produced multiple, eye-catching perfor-

mances. He has a 2-year-old mark of 1:49.0M, a 3-year-old mark of 1:48.0M and earnings of \$872,328 (to date with several major stake races to come).

In 2024, at 2, he won the New Jersey Classic Final in 1:50.1 (a personal best at the time); set a track record mile of 1:49.0 in a Breeders Crown elimination at The Meadowlands; and captured the prestigious Governor's Cup in a sharp 1:49.3 mile, securing a \$382,200 purse.

In 2025, he won the 3-year-old Triple Crown Cane Pace in 1:48.1 and the 3-year-old Bluegrass stake in 1:48.0.



Please Call or Text Dr. Chris Samaha
to make an appointment

732-740-5376

Walkups are welcome until 2:30pm, based on availability.

OCTOBER:
Monday, Oct. 6 & 20

NOVEMBER:
Monday, Nov. 3 & 17

DECEMBER:
Monday, Dec. 8

12:15 PM - 4:00 PM IN THE BCAP TRAILER OFFICE
(Next to barn 17 at Gaitway)

TrotPAC trustees continue to attend during these uncertain times to help dardbred racing and breeding in New Legislators it is more important than known in Trenton. TrotPAC trustees portance of our industry to all the State Legis- ed the events for the following people: Senator Michael Eliana Pintor Marin, Assemblyman David Bailey, Assemblyman Michael Venezia, Assemblyman Chris Tully, Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz, Senator Latham Tiver, Assemblywoman Andrea Katz, Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald, Assemblyman Dan Hutchison, Senator Gordon Johnson, Assemblyman Al Barlas, Assemblyman Alex Sauickie, Assemblywoman Tennille R. McCoy, Assemblyman Clinton Calabrese, Assemblyman Roy Freiman, Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, Assemblyman John DiMaio, Assemblyman Craig J. Coughlin, Senator Troy Singleton, and candidate for New Jersey governor Jack Ciattarelli.

TROT PAC

many political leaders' fundraisers ensure the long-term viability of Stan- Jersey. With the recent changes in ever that TrotPAC make its presence must now educate and promote the im- lators. Most recently TrotPAC trustees attend-

Testa, Jr, Senator Joseph A. Lagana, Assemblywoman Testa, Jr, Senator Joseph A. Lagana, Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz, Senator Latham Tiver, Assemblywoman Andrea Katz, Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald, Assemblyman Dan Hutchison, Senator Gordon Johnson, Assemblyman Al Barlas, Assemblyman Alex Sauickie, Assemblywoman Tennille R. McCoy, Assemblyman Clinton Calabrese, Assemblyman Roy Freiman, Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, Assemblyman John DiMaio, Assemblyman Craig J. Coughlin, Senator Troy Singleton, and candidate for New Jersey governor Jack Ciattarelli.



Dr. Karyn Malinowski, New Jersey Governor Candidate Mikie Sherrill and SBOANJ Executive Administrator Alfred Ochsner Jr.



Executive Administrator Alfred Ochsner Jr., New Jersey Governor Candidate Jack Ciattarelli and TrotPAC trustees Linda Toscano, Chris Ryder, Julie Miller and Anthony Romano.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I would like to share several important developments and updates from across our industry, many of which reflect both significant progress and critical challenges as we move toward the end of the year.

We are pleased to announce that live racing has resumed at the Meadowlands with a special additional schedule: in November and December, racing will take place on Thursdays (in addition to the usual days) on the dates of November 6, 13, 20 and December 4, 11 and 18. This reopening is a welcome sign of renewed activity and opportunity for our horsemen, trainers, owners, and racing fans alike.

I'm also pleased to report that the NJRC has approved the allocation of excess purse money from what was formerly directed to Freehold Raceway, now being distributed toward health benefit insurance and retirement program support for participants in our industry. With Freehold's closure and the resulting shift in purse distribution, this represents a meaningful reinforcement of our commitment to the welfare and long-term economic security for horsemen.

Another significant update: the NJRC has mandated that a new Horse Racing Impact Report, covering data through 2024, is to be prepared and submitted prior to release of any funds. This report is required each year as a pre-condition to release the annual \$20 million state appropriation for 2026 and beyond. The aim is to ensure transparency, accountability and demonstration of the economic and community impact of horse racing in New Jersey. We all need to cooperate in gathering the necessary data and analysis so that the appropriation continues uninterrupted.

We have learned that the Hambletonian, a cornerstone event for our standardbred community, may not be held at the Meadowlands in 2027. While discussions are still ongoing, we anticipate a resolution soon.

Turning to the sales side of the business: the 2025 edition of the Lexington Selected Yearling Sale closed with a gross of approximately \$60.89 million. The sale remains strong and active. In this environment it remains more important than ever for breeders, consignors and buyers to stay vigilant, strategic and collaborative.

Finally, we recognize the closing of Fairwinds Farm, a facility with a long history in our business whose broodmares and yearlings have been a staple to New Jersey racing. While we are saddened by the closure of a farm the size and significance of Fair Winds, we remain optimistic about future possibilities. (add period)

Looking ahead, our industry remains at a crossroads: with robust opportunities and serious challenges. It is important that all of us owners, trainers, and breeders stay engaged, informed and ready to act.

Mark Ford



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