



# The Horsemen's Newsletter

January 2012

Vol. 22 • Number 1

## Russell & Kobiskie Capture 2011 Titles

Sheldon Russell and Dane Kobiskie wrapped up year-end titles for the calendar year 2011 in the jockey and trainer divisions respectively at the major Maryland tracks.

Russell captured the riding title at all three meets at Laurel Park and Pimlico Race Course this year, finishing with 126 victories, 24 more than Julian Pimentel, including 55 during the Laurel fall meeting. The 24-year-old also led the colony with 10 stakes wins in the state, with three victories aboard Eightfasttocatch and two with Red's Round Table and Concealed Identity.

Kobiskie saddled 58 winners at the major Maryland tracks during the campaign, 21 more than Dale Capuano. The 32-year-old former rider won races at an impressive 28% rate and won the prestigious Laurel Futurity and Selima Stakes for 2-year-olds with Lemon Juice and Softly Lit respectively.

Kobiskie finished runner-up in the fall standings with 29 wins, five fewer than Jamie Ness.



## MTHA Strikes Deal For 146 Racing Days in 2012



The Maryland Jockey Club (MJC) and Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (MTHA) reached an agreement to run a full race schedule of 146 days in Maryland in 2012 with no contingencies.

"I am pleased that we got this resolved," said Richard Hoffberger, MTHA president. "This means we were able to keep together our year-round racing program for 2012 which is crucial to the sustainability of the entire horse industry within the state of Maryland."

In an 11th-hour deal brokered by Gov. Martin O'Malley for 2011 race dates, the Maryland Jockey Club agreed to maintain 146 days of live racing for three years. The governor's administration also pushed through legislation that redirected up to \$6 million annually in slots revenue to help the financially struggling tracks. In exchange, The Maryland Jockey Club agreed to maintain a 146 day schedule for 2011, 2012 and 2013.

But in October, the Stronach Group, the parent company of the Maryland Jockey Club, shocked everyone by announcing that it did not wish to accept redirected slots monies and proposed running just 40 live racing days next year at Pimlico around the Preakness.

The deal agreed upon for 2012 race dates requires a contribution of \$4-Million by the horsemen which will come from simulcast revenue.

A similar contribution of \$1.7 million was consented to in 2011 which was shared with the Maryland Horse Breeders' Association (MHBA), with the payment split 89 percent paid by MTHA, 11 percent paid by MHBA.

The MTHA, however, agreed to contribute the entire \$4-Million for 2012 without assistance from MHBA to assure a deal was reached to avoid any potential shutdown before the holiday season.

Both the MTHA and MJC have also pledged to meet on a bi-weekly basis to work together to develop a long-term plan for thoroughbred racing in Maryland with a goal of a proposal in place by July 1, 2012.

The agreement was approved unanimously by the MTHA Board of Directors on December 20 and submitted to the Maryland Racing Commission for final approval later that same day which was subsequently granted.

Live racing resumed at Laurel Park on January 4th and will continue until March 24th when racing will shift back to Pimlico for a 29-day meet highlighted by the 137th running of the Preakness Stakes (G1).



## News Clips

### Parx Horsemen's Group Rejoins THA

The Pennsylvania Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, which represents horsemen at Parx Racing, is back under the umbrella of the Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association.

The Pennsylvania THA was a founding member of the THA but left the organization more than 10 years ago. The horsemen's group then became a National Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association affiliate for several years before going out on its own.



The MTHA is also an affiliate of THA which joins Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania in the Northeast, and Illinois in the Midwest.

### Preakness Allows Also-Eligibles

The Preakness Stakes (G1) will include an also-eligible list for the first time when it is contested in 2012.

The Maryland Jockey Club approved the addition of a two-horse also-eligible list for the Baltimore classic, the second jewel in the Triple Crown.

A maximum of 14 horses can start in the Preakness, which in 2012 is scheduled to be run on May 19 at Pimlico. If more than 14 horses enter, up to two horses could be included on an also-eligible list. Those horses would be eligible to run if any of the field's 14 entries are declared out of the race between the post position draw on Wednesday of Preakness week and the Friday morning before race day.

## The Horsemen's Newsletter

Published monthly by the  
**Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Inc.**

6314 Windsor Mill Road,  
Baltimore, Md. 21207;  
(410) 265-6842; Fax: (410) 265-6841;  
E-mail: mdhorsemen@erols.com  
Website: www.mdhorsemen.com

**The Horsemen's Newsletter** reports on issues and events of interest to owners and trainers in Maryland. Your suggestions are welcome.

## Jockey Club Launches Online Database Of Thoroughbred Trainer Rulings

The Jockey Club recently announced the launch of Thoroughbred Regulatory Rulings™, a searchable online database of rulings on Thoroughbred trainers from racing regulatory authorities. The web address is [thoroughbredrulings.com](http://thoroughbredrulings.com).

Thoroughbred Regulatory Rulings™

Search Parameters

Trainer Name: <input type="text"/>	Date Range: (M/D/YY) <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/>
Association: <input type="text"/>	Suspension Start: (M/D/YY) <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/>
Regulatory Authority: <input type="text"/>	Fine: \$ <input type="text"/>
Horse: <input type="text"/>	

Thoroughbred Rulings

Thoroughbred Regulatory Rulings currently includes approximately 12,000 Thoroughbred trainer rulings from 33 U.S. racing jurisdictions. A list of regulatory authorities represented in the database, along with the date of earliest and latest rulings from each, is available on the homepage. Updates to the database will be made on a periodic basis as the latest rulings are made available from racing regulatory authorities.



## Reminders

### 2012 Badges

Trainers are reminded to fill out their 2012 badge list and turn it into the Racing Office.

### Winter Clothing Needed

Now is an ideal time to clean out your closet and donate unused items for distribution on the backstretch.

Winter clothing: coats, hats, gloves, etc. are especially appreciated.

Items can be brought to the MTHA office at Laurel, or call Bobby Lillis at (410) 265-6843.

### Pony Those Youngsters

Trainers are urged to school young horses with a lead pony.

A young horse who is unfamiliar with ponies can be difficult for the outrider—and his pony—to handle when there is a need to do so. This creates a hazardous situation on the track.

### Backstretch Pension Sign Up Time Is Near

Annual registration for the MTHA's Backstretch Pension Program begins in early 2012. Exact dates will appear in next month's newsletter. The plan is open to all individuals employed in the care of horses on the backstretch. Employees do not make financial contributions to the plan. However, registration is required every year.

### 1099s Available Online

Horsemen are reminded that account information, including 1099 forms for 2011, is available online.

The InCompass computer system in the Horsemen's Bookkeeper's office provides online access 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This service is facilitated by the MTHA.

To sign up for account access, call the bookkeeper's office.

## Congress blocks H-2B wage rule

Congress has passed an Omnibus Appropriations bill (H.R. 2055) that will prohibit the Department of Labor from implementing a new wage rule for the H-2B program and fund most federal agencies through Sept. 30, 2012.

The wage rule, opposed by many H-2B



employers for potentially devastating economic consequences, generally would have increased the hourly wage that must be paid to all current and future H-2B workers and American workers recruited in connection with an H-2B job application.



# Board Actions

## Special MTHA Board Meeting – December 20th at Laurel Park

*Members present:* Richard J. Hoffberger, President, Richard J. Meyer, Vice President, W. Robert Bailes, Christine E. Bricker, Linda S. Gaudet, Christopher W. Grove, Michael F. Horning, R. Larry Johnson, Timothy L. Keefe, Lawrence E. Murray, Katharine M. Voss.

*Members absent:* Howard M. Bender, Dale Capuano, H. Neil Glasser and Arnold A. Heft.

### Racing Days

The Board unanimously approved an expense contribution of \$4-million from the Purse Account to the The Stronach Group (parent of The Maryland Jockey Club), paid in monthly installments, provided that Maryland Jockey Club conduct a total of 146 live racing days in 2012, barring cancellation caused by weather or other natural event.

### Simulcasting

The Board unanimously approved the import of signals and the export of the Maryland signal for 2012.

### Jockey Insurance

The Board approved by a vote of 8 to 2 paying the premium of the Maryland Jockey Workers' Compensation Insurance for 2012 from the Purse Account in addition to the funds generated from a \$100 fee to each owner and trainer when licensed as well as a surplus from previous years carried forward.

Voting for were Mr. Bailes, Ms. Bricker, Mrs. Gaudet, Mr. Grove, Mr. Keefe, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Murray, and Ms. Voss.

Voting against were Mr. Horning and Mr. Johnson.

*Continued from Page 4...*

outlined during the meetings that we will have with track management in the coming months.

I believe that we have a good working relationship with the management of the Maryland Jockey Club and Mr. Stronach's senior management team. These are the same people that were involved in working out the agreements we have completed in the past, and the negotiating group for Stronach has remained unchanged over the past few years.

While there were a number of proposals floated for future racing schedules, some as few as 40 days of racing and another that consisted of two 40 day meets, the MTHA felt that the 146 day schedule at this time was critical.

The vast support of the racing community for the 146 day schedule was important and appreciated. While there are some that were willing to discuss a shorter schedule, or were agreeable to making other significant concessions to track management, the strength of the racing community at large did help us reach our goal.

Status quo can not continue forever. Maryland continuing to keep a year-round racing schedule will require innovation, a new plan for when and where we run (the possibility of a circuit), and a new approach as to how to reach our customers (the bettors).

It is important that we find a way to make Maryland once again an attractive place, not only for local owners to want to invest in race horses but for out of state owners to feel comfortable that sending horses to this state will be advantageous to them.

Simply reducing the number of days we race will not allow the business to grow. Only by creating new and better opportunities for owners and bettors will we be able to move our business forward. What we work out in the next few months will have a long term effect on the future of racing in Maryland.

*/Richard J. Hoffberger, MTHA President*



## Recreation Report

*From Dan Mangum,  
MTHA Recreation Director.*

### Bowling

The bowling tournament is now scheduled for Monday, February 27, at Laurel Fair Lanes. Call Dan Mangum at 410-802-5798 or sign up in the track kitchens.

### Poker

Winner of the December 12 mock Texas hold'em tournament at Bowie was Russell Clark. The next tournament will be held in April.

### Basketball

Basketball games are held Sunday evenings at 6 p.m. at Meade High School.

### Donations

The following generous people recently donated clothing, reading material and/or other items for distribution on the backstretch or made a monetary contribution: Jack Adamecz, J.D. Brown, Michael and Joann Dalton, Gene Gilhooly, George Hofferbert, Scott & Rosemary Lishia, and Nicole & David Richardson.



## Horsemen's Calendar

### LIVE RACING

*Laurel Park*..... Now - Mar. 24  
*Pimlico*..... Mar. 30 - May 19  
*Timonium*..... Aug. 24 - Sept. 3

### FASIG-TIPTON MIDLANTIC AUCTIONS

AT TIMONIUM (410) 392-5555

*Two-Year-Olds in Training* ..... May 21-22

### OUT-OF-STATE AUCTIONS

*Fasig-Tipton Kentucky Winter Mixed*,  
Lexington, Ky., ..... Feb. 7  
*Ocala Breeders' Sales Company Selected  
Sale of Two Year Olds In Training*  
Ocala, Fl. .... Mar. 13-14

*Keeneland Two-Year-Olds in Training*,  
Lexington, Ky., ..... April. 9

*Ocala Breeders' Sales Company  
Spring Sale of Two Year Olds In Training*  
Ocala, Fl. .... Apr. 23-26

*Ocala Breeders' Sales Company  
June Two Year Olds & HORA Sale*  
Ocala, Fl. .... Jun. 19-20

*Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July Sale*,  
Lexington, Ky., ..... Jul. 10-11

*Ocala Breeders' Sales Company  
Selected Sale of Yearlings*  
Ocala, Fl. .... Aug. 21

*Ocala Breeders' Sales Company  
Open Sale of Yearlings*  
Ocala, Fl. .... Aug. 22-23

## In Memoriam

Trainer **James T. "Jimmy" Avery** passed away on December 10 at the age of 65. Jimmy began his career at Pimlico in 1976 and campaigned horses until 2003 where he had over 1,000 starts almost exclusively in Maryland.



# Slots Revenue Lower Than Expected

Maryland budget analysts predict slot machines will generate nearly \$475 million less for the state during the coming five years than previously forecast. That's about 12 percent less than what was expected.

The revenue write-down is due to the weak economy, greater competition from surrounding states and delayed openings of Maryland casinos. A delay in the planned opening of Maryland Live! at Arundel Mills mall in Hanover cost the state over \$170 million in expected revenue in 2011, the analysts said. The casino is now advertising a partial June opening.

Licenses for two other authorized casinos in Baltimore and Western Maryland were recently rebid and



could be awarded by early 2012.

Analysts said they have lowered the revenue expectations for Maryland Live! and the Baltimore site due to greater competition from a full-fledged casino in Charles Town, W. Va., and new casinos in the Philadelphia area.

By law, 7 percent of slots revenue in Maryland is directed toward horsemen and breeders. That 7 percent is divided between the Thoroughbred and Standardbred industries on an 80/20 percentage basis. The Maryland-bred Fund receives 11 percent of the Thoroughbred share, and the remaining 89 percent goes to the Purse Account.



## MTHA

6314 Windsor Mill Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21207

## January 2012

## Thoughts and Comments

Much of the discussions that the MTHA had with the track about racing dates for 2012 were similar to the discussions about the 2011 days. Unfortunately the track could not work on future plans in the beginning of the year until the Maryland Jockey Club separated itself from Penn Gaming. I can not say why the track was silent for the next couple of months.

Our goal of having a racing schedule that includes 146 days for next year was our primary objective. We reached that objective after many hours of negotiating.

The MTHA did agree to increase our

contribution to the track, and at \$4M, that figure is very close to the amount that the MTHA contributed for operating costs (i.e. OTBs, intertrack wagering) about 12 years ago.

Moving forward, we did agree to discuss issues with the track and these discussions will take place over the next 6 months. The outcome of these discussions is not tied to the 2012 racing schedule. The Stronach organization has stated that they would like to have a long range plan for Maryland racing. I anticipate that those plans will be

*Continued on Page 3*

## MTHA Board of Directors

Richard J. Hoffberger  
President

Richard J. Meyer  
Vice President

W. Robert Bailes  
Howard M. Bender  
Christine E. Bricker

Dale Capuano

Linda S. Gaudet

H. Neil Glasser

Christopher W. Grove

Arnold A. Heft

Michael F. Horning

R. Larry Johnson

Timothy L. Keefe

Lawrence E. Murray

Katharine M. Voss