



The Horsemen's Newsletter



January 2018

Vol. 28 • Number 1

Match Series Gaining Steam For A Revival

Racetracks and horsemen's groups in the Mid-Atlantic region have met twice over the past few months in an attempt to fashion a series of races that would lead to the return of the widely acclaimed Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred Championships, commonly referred to as the MATCH Series.

MATCH, created by the Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association in the mid 1990s, was last held in 2001. It featured five divisions, each with six stakes at tracks in the region, and offered up to \$500,000 in bonus money for participating owners and trainers.

There have been discussions over the years to revive the series, which in its last season offered \$3.125 million in purses from existing stakes that were scheduled from mid-April through mid-September. Participating tracks varied from year to year, and horsemen's groups affiliated with the National Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association also provided bonus money for MATCH in Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

MATCH is based on points accrued via the order of finish in each stakes in the series to encourage participation in as many races as possible. The owners and trainers of the top finishers in each division earn bonus money, as do the overall point-getters.

Discussions thus far have involved six racetracks and their respective horsemen's groups. Five divisions, each with five stakes, have been identified to maximize participation in the series, which would run from the third weekend in May through the third weekend in September and offer up to \$450,000 in bonus money provided by participating horsemen's groups.

The talks on the MATCH Series have had another benefit in that racing directors and racing secretaries are working to coordinate stakes in the competitive Mid-Atlantic region with a goal of maximizing field size and increasing pari-mutuel revenue for participating tracks.



Indian Paint Wins Fantasy Owners' Challenge; Some Participants Invest

A timely and successful trip to Pennsylvania in Sept. proved the deciding move that gave Gunpowder Farms' Indian Paint the top spot in the 2017 Fantasy Ownership Challenge sponsored by the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Maryland Jockey Club and Maryland Horse Breeders Association.

The Challenge, launched Mar. 18 at Laurel Park as part of a Fantasy Owners Day promotion that included a seminar on Thoroughbred ownership, offered \$50,000 in prize money to the "owners" of the top five horses based on their earnings through Dec. 31. The horses' names were drawn randomly by those who participated in the new owner seminar.

Indian Paint, a 4-year-old Uncle Mo filly trained by Kelly Rubley, who is based at Fair Hill Training Center, won three races in 2017, all of them in the contest period. She won a maiden special weight event at Laurel in Apr., an allowance race at Delaware Park in Jun., and another allowance race at Parx Racing in Sep., and also had a second and third in allowance company during her campaign.

Indian Paint's contest earnings were \$111,745 according to official Equibase statistics.

The promotion encouraged several people to invest in racehorses, including Cara Neary of Alexandria, Va. Neary is one of the three "owners" of Indian Paint.

Neary on Mar. 18 visited the Taste of Victory Stables booth, got information on partnerships, and eventually invested in two 2-year-olds purchased by Laurel-based trainer Phil Schoenthal at the Fasig-Tipton Timonium sale in May.

The first to race, the filly Hercatwillfoolu, won a maiden special weight at Timonium in her second start and then finished second in an allowance race at Laurel. The second one, Maryland-bred Cherryandthehawk, finished a close second in her second start in a waiver/maiden-claiming race at Laurel Dec. 29.

The horses are owned by Taste of Victory Stables and Schoenthal's Kingdom Bloodstock.

"From that perspective, this is what (Fantasy Owners Day) was intended to do," Schoenthal said.

Each of the top five horses had three "owners" and the prize money will be awarded as follows: \$30,000 for first, \$10,000 for second, \$5,500 for third, \$3,000 for fourth and \$1,500 for fifth.

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Van Service

The MTHA Express is continuing to help many on the backstretch for doctors, dentist, social security, and social service appointments. To schedule a ride, contact Dan Mangum at 410-802-5798, or see Bobby, Jessica, or Diana to make arrangements. Trips are on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Texas Hold'em

We held two poker tournaments in the month of December. Tony Aguirre won the first tournament. Wayne "Bam Bam" Potts finished second and Marty Leonard finished third.

Steven Kell won the second tournament with TJ Aguirre coming in second and Tim Walsh finishing in third.

There will be three tournaments in January on the 2nd, 16th and 30th in the Laurel Park Rec Room starting at 12:30.

MTHA Winter Clothing Drive

With winter here, the importance of the MTHA's clothing drive is growing. Two collection bins are conveniently available at Laurel Park near the stable gate and horsemen's entrance with donations being distributed to backstretch workers in need.



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Published by the

MTHA

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Beyond The Wire Sponsoring Horsemen's Informational Seminar



Owners, trainers and assistant trainers are encouraged to attend a Feb. 6 seminar on racehorse injuries and their implications for racing and retirement.

Dr. Patty Hogan, a New Jersey-based equine surgeon who regularly works with retired racehorses and assists various aftercare programs

in the region, will be the guest speaker. The program, sponsored by Beyond The Wire, Maryland's Thoroughbred aftercare program, is scheduled to begin at 11:30 a.m. in the clubhouse at Laurel Park.

The event is free, and lunch will be provided.

Hogan was the first recipient of the New York Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association EquiStar Award in 2016 for donating her time and skills to assist retired racehorses, including some that went through NYTHA's TAKE THE LEAD aftercare program.

"Whether you are an owner or trainer, this kind of information can help all of us make better medical decisions about our equine athletes – a sounder, well-managed racehorse is a positive for everyone and allows that horse increased opportunities to transition into a useful second career," Hogan said.

For more information or questions contact Jessica Hammond at (301) 776-0404 or via email at jessica@mdhorsemen.com.

Wolf, Gonzalez, Toledo Top Fall Meet Standings

James Wolf, Claudio Gonzalez and Jevian Toledo captured the leading owner, trainer and jockey titles by wins, respectively, during the Laurel Park fall meet that began Sept. 8 and ended prematurely on Dec. 30.

Wolf won 12 races with 10 seconds and three thirds from 43 starts. His win total was four better than Joseph Besecker, Three M's Racing and Robert Bone, who tied for second with eight victories each. Gumpster Stable and Jagger Inc. finished fifth with seven wins.

Wolf also topped the owners' list by earnings with \$289,388 for the fall meet. Overall, he won 22 races at Laurel, Pimlico Race Course and the Maryland State Fair at Timonium in 2017.

Gonzalez, who is based at Laurel, won 33 races. Kieron Magee and Dale Capuano tied for second with 22 wins, followed by Hamilton Smith at 18 and Mike Trombetta with 17.

Gonzalez was leading trainer by earnings with \$1,029,257. He also was Maryland's overall leading trainer for 2017 with 84 victories.

"I'm very happy because it's not easy here," Gonzalez said. "There are a lot of good trainers with a lot of experience. My people, my em-

ployees, are the key because I have a very good group. They work together.

"The owners bring better horses and we're claiming for more money and that makes a difference."

Toledo topped the fall meet standings with 61 wins from 349 mounts, followed by Feargal Lynch and Sheldon Russell, each with 39; Steve Hamilton with 30; and Horacio Karamanos and Alex Cintron, each with 26. Toledo also led with purse earnings of \$1,837,158.

Toledo was Maryland's leading jockey for the year with 144 victories.

"First of all I have to thank God, without him we cannot do anything," said Toledo, who is represented by agent Marty Leonard. "I have to thank all the owners and trainers for the opportunities. The exercise riders and the grooms they do a good job with the horses. My agent has done a great job."

Laurel lost the final three races on the Dec. 30 card and the entire Dec. 31 program. In addition, the 2018 season was delayed slightly after racing was canceled the first week of January.

Pimlico Backstretch Worker Of The Year: ENRIQUE LOPEZ

Mexico native Enrique Lopez began working with horses in Kentucky in 1988 and in 2002 moved to Maryland, where he worked for the late trainer Richard Small for a short time.

The following year he took a job with trainer Ann Merryman and, 14 years later, still works for the Pimlico Race Course-based stable. His dedication to Thoroughbreds and conscientiousness as an employee have earned him the honor of Groom of the Year at Pimlico Race Course for 2017.

Lopez said his father worked for Small, who advised him to move to Maryland from Kentucky. It proved a wise decision that laid the foundation for his career.

"Moving to Maryland allowed me to learn a lot more about horses," said Lopez, who began working for Merryman and Holly Robinson, in 2003. "I've learned a lot from Ann and like working for her because she gives me the liberty to do what I need to do. I'm very happy, excited and thankful (for the recognition). I really don't have any other words to describe it."

Lopez, who lives in Maryland except for short trips to Mexico to be with family around the Christmas holiday each year, said his experience working for one stable for a long period of time has been rewarding. Though he has built upon his knowledge and reputation, Robinson indicated he was adept from the start.

"When I trained horses, Enrique was my right arm," she said.

Merryman recalled a day at Colonial Downs – the Virginia track that raced when Maryland was dark under a cross-state agreement between the racing associations – that showed her Lopez's value to the stable.

"We were at Colonial Downs years ago with six horses in to race and one other groom there, and I was worried how it would ever work," Merryman said. "Enrique said, 'We're good,' and we were. All the horses ran without a glitch – it was like nothing for him."

"He does everything to perfection, and he has a photographic memory which comes in very handy."

Laurel Park Backstretch Worker Of The Year: ARTURO PINONES

Arturo Pinones considers himself very fortunate to have been the primary groom for Raval, a winner of 18 races and more than \$1.34 million in his career. And people associated with the Laurel Park-based Donald Barr stable feel fortunate to have had Pinones on the team for more than two decades.

Pinones, selected as the Groom of the Year at Laurel Park for 2017, came to the United States from Mexico in 1984 and spent 12 years in California. He moved to Maryland and has worked for Barr for 22 years.

Pinones became the go-to guy for Barr when the trainer was on vacation, and often traveled with horses that raced out of town. One of Barr's clients said Pinones is invaluable not only for his work ethic but his love of family.

"I get to see how important grooms are to our business, and Arturo exemplifies not only a good groom on Donald's team, but he takes the time to talk to the owners and builds trust and friendship necessary to have a successful team," said owner Walt Visier, who has six horses in training with Barr. "He takes the time that he doesn't have to make sure my family feels part of the Barr racing team."

"He's also a good father and husband. We talk about anything from horses to kids to fishing."

Pinones speaks with pride about Raval, who won 13 stakes – two of them graded, including the Maryland Sprint Handicap – while in Barr's barn. Then owned by Lindy Redding, Raval won stakes at eight different tracks and relished the synthetic surfaces at Presque Isle Downs & Casino and at Woodbine.

"That was my horse," said Pinones, who got to see new racetracks and environments when he traveled with Redding to care for Raval and watch his races. "There was a lot of emotion. He could run. He was a very nice horse."

Pinones said Raval "would go crazy in his stall," but he when he entered the stall and put wraps on the gelding, he was relaxed. Pinones used that as an example of how important the relationship is between a groom and a racehorse.

"There are a lot of good grooms," Pinones said. "They have a heart for horses. I've found that when you're good to horses, the horses like you. They don't kick me. I think if you're nice to horses,



2017 MTHA Toy Drive: A Resounding Success!

Almost 60 children celebrated Christmas a few days early when they visited with Santa Claus and received toys Dec. 23 in the track kitchen at Laurel Park.

The annual toy drive is coordinated by the MTHA and the Maryland Jockey Club, and participation was excellent. Attendees to the MTHA Christmas Party and Laurel patrons who took part in a "bring a toy, get a gift" promotion responded enthusiastically.

The event is held each year for the benefit of the children of backstretch employees at Laurel and Pimlico Race Course.



The MTHA would like to thank all those who donated toys as well as jockey Victor Carrasco, who provided Toys"R"Us gift cards that were raffled after Santa gave the toys to the kids.

Carrasco, injured in a riding accident last summer at Delaware Park, is currently undergoing physical therapy and indicated he hopes to be back in the saddle at Laurel in early spring.



► Fantasy Ownership, From Page 1

The three owners will split their share equally.

The MTHA, MJC and MHBA congratulate the winners, who are as follows:

First place (Indian Paint) – Cody Favata of Chesapeake Beach, Md.; Kate Gehret of Lewes, Del.; and Cara Neary of Alexandria, Va.

Second place (Participate) – Bruce Casella of Voorhees Township, N.J.; Michele Kuegler of Manchester, N.H.; and Rob Thomsen of Baltimore, Md.

Third place (Yes Mz Adah) – Denise Heim of Ellicott City, Md.; James McIntyre of Annapolis, Md.; and Tom Pendergast of Palmyra, Pa.

Fourth place (Seeing'nbelieving) – Guy Botterill of Parkton, Md.; Kevin O'Keeffe of Baltimore, Md.; and Fredrik Otter of Rockville, Md.

Fifth place (Flight Crew) – Glenn Gareluk of Falls Church, Va.; Mindy Miller of Mt. Laurel, N.J.; and Bill Norris of Severna Park, Md.



MedStar Sports Medicine

Horsemen's Health System Winter 2018 Schedule

January 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

March 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- Dr. Kelly Ryan
- Dr. Frank Dawson
- Dr. Jeffrey Mayer
- Dr. Christian Glaser
- Dr. Jason Pothast



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January 2018

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