



# The Horsemen's Newsletter



March 2018

Vol. 1 Number 3



## The Highly Acclaimed MATCH Series Returns In 2018!

Maryland-based horsemen take note: More than \$3.6 million in purse money and bonuses for owners and trainers will be available this year in the Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred Championships (MATCH) Series, and eight of the 25 stakes in the series will be held at Laurel Park and Pimlico Race Course.

The highly popular MATCH Series was last held in 2001. This year, it will feature five divisions, each with five stakes, from mid-May through mid-September.

The Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and its affiliates in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania; Maryland Jockey Club (Pimlico and Laurel); Delaware Park; Greenwood Gaming and Entertainment (Parx); Penn National Gaming (Hollywood Casino at Penn National Race Course); Darby Development (Monmouth Park); Eldorado Resorts (Presque Isle Downs & Casino); and the Pennsylvania Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association participated in discussions during the past six months and struck an agreement to revive the MATCH Series and expand cooperation among all stakeholders in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Horses competing in MATCH earn points based on participation and order of finish, and the leading points earners in each of the series divisions, as well as the overall owner and trainer points leaders, will receive lucrative bonuses.

The 2018 series will be contested among five divisions: 3-Year-Olds & Up Long—Dirt; 3-Year-Olds & Up Sprint—Dirt; 3-Year-Olds & Up Fillies and Mares Sprint—Dirt; 3-Year Olds & Up Sprint—Turf; and 3-Year-Olds and Up Fillies and Mares Sprint—Turf. Each division will have five races from mid-May through mid-September (the Series schedule is found on page 3).

Total purse money is \$2.9 million. Horsemen will compete for \$450,000 in bonus money, all contributed by the participating horsemen's organizations.

The first-, second- and third-place owners, respectively, in each division will earn \$20,000, \$15,000, and \$10,000. The top three earning trainers will earn \$15,000, \$10,000

## Board OKs Plan To Pay Back To Last In Overnight Races On Dirt

Horses that finish fifth through last in all dirt races at Laurel Park will collect the equivalent of 4% of the published purse for overnight races effective March 2 with the third condition book of the winter meet.

The Maryland Jockey Club and the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association have been discussing different ways to increase the return for owners and trainers who compete in the state as well as boost field size.

Currently, the published purse is paid 57% for first, 21% for second, 11% for third, 3% for fifth and 2% for sixth. Under the

new formula, if the purse is \$25,000 for example, fifth place would be worth \$1,000 (up from \$750) and sixth place would be worth \$1,000 (up from \$500). If there are nine horses in the race, the final three finishers would each receive \$1,000 as well.

The MTHA Board of Directors during its Feb. 23 board meeting agreed to support the plan given the purse account has a surplus. The MTHA and MJC in recent years have worked together to gradually increase racing dates and in turn offer additional purse opportunities.

## Gonzalez, Sagamore, Toledo Win Renaissance Awards

Claudio Gonzalez, Sagamore Farm and Jevian Toledo were honored for their 2017 success in Maryland during the inaugural Renaissance Awards Feb. 12 at the Sagamore Pendry in Baltimore.

The program, which attracted more than 200 people, was put together by the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Maryland Horse Breeders Association and Maryland Jockey Club. Previously, the MTHA and MHBA held their own awards programs on different evenings.

The awards for trainer, owner and jockey, which had been selected by the MTHA, were put to a vote by writers and publicists as part of the new awards format.

Gonzalez, the Maryland Trainer of the Year, overall won 118 races last year, 90 of them at Maryland tracks, and was the leading trainer at the Laurel Park summer and fall meets as well as the Maryland State Fair at Timonium meet. Last year he claimed the mare My Magician—she

*Continued on Page 2*

# MTHA Backstretch Pension Program, A Valuable Perk For Maryland's Horsemen

Retirement benefits for backstretch workers are a reality in Maryland, thanks to a program started by the MTHA in 1988. The Backstretch Pension Fund is derived from monies deducted from the Purse Account. Participants do not make individual contributions into the plan.

The Board of Directors of the MTHA annually allocates funds to support this program. The plan year 2017 contribution is \$400,000, which is distributed among all participant's accounts for that year.

Sign-ups for the Pension Program are conducted each spring at Laurel Park and Pimlico. At that time, employees must register to receive benefits based on the previous year.

For individual questions regarding your pension account, contact Allison Bach. She

can be reached by calling (410) 771-3035 or by email at [abach@pollardpensions.com](mailto:abach@pollardpensions.com) for questions about accounts or for information about cashing out.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PENSION PROGRAM

Anyone employed in the care of horses on the backstretch in Maryland in good standing, including trainers, are eligible to participate in the program.

Employees must have worked a minimum of 1,000 hours during the specified year in Maryland, and provide documentation to that effect (with a W-2 or 1099 form, or tax return) at time of sign-up.

Benefits become available when the employee reaches the age of 65, or at age 55 with 25 years of service.



► **MATCH, From Page 1**

and \$5,000, respectively. The MATCH Series overall top earning owner will win \$50,000, while the top earning trainer will earn \$25,000.

"I am delighted that the series is returning," said MATCH creator and THA Chairman Alan Foreman. "The Mid-Atlantic region has been working cooperatively on so many levels during the past five years, and the renewal of MATCH is a further testament to this cooperation. I am pleased that we are able to tell the horsemen who have asked about MATCH so many times over recent years that it is back, and we are looking forward to a great competition."

Maryland will be the focal point when the series begins with four stakes at Pimlico: the \$100,000 Skipat and \$100,000 Jim McKay Turf Sprint on May 18, and \$100,000 The Very One and \$150,000 Maryland Sprint Stakes (grade III) on May 19.

The other four Maryland stakes in the MATCH Series will be held in August and September at Laurel: the \$100,000 Polynesian on Aug. 12, and on Sept. 15—the final weekend of the series—the \$100,000 Laurel Dash, \$100,000 Sensible Lady Turf Dash, and the \$250,000 Frank De Francis Memorial Dash (grade III).

Racing directors at each of the participating tracks worked together to select divisions that could provide the least amount of overlap and, hopefully, larger fields for all concerned. Thus, participating horsemen will have a regional roadmap of stakes for their horses for roughly five months.

"If it's a success, we'll try to build on that success," Foreman said. "We hope the series leads to other kinds of cooperation in the region. To the extent of picking our spots for the benefit of horsemen, racetracks and fans, this is a good place to start."

"From our perspective, we were able to get the tracks in the region together on this," MJC President Sal Sinatra said. "I'm really excited about that part of it. We're a big supporter, obviously."



Pension Plan Registration for the plan year 2017 will take place at the following times and locations. Bring your MRC Badge and W-2, 1099, or tax return for 2017. For more information call the MTHA office at (410) 902-6842.

### April 23 through April 27

Laurel Track Kitchen,  
9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

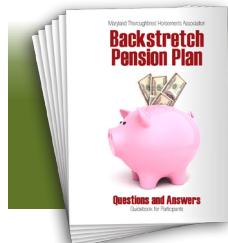
### April 30 through May 4

Laurel Track Kitchen,  
9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

### May 7 through May 11

Pimlico MTHA Office,  
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Failure to register will result in the loss of your 2017 benefit.**



Stop in the MTHA Racetrack Office or visit [mdhorsemen.com](http://mdhorsemen.com) for a copy of the MTHA Backstretch Pension Plan Guidebook to answer all your questions about the Plan.

## The Horsemen's Newsletter

Published by the  
**MTHA**

500 Redland Court – Suite 105,  
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117;  
(410) 902-6842; Fax: (410) 902-6841;  
E-mail: [info@mdhorsemen.com](mailto:info@mdhorsemen.com)  
Website: [www.mdhorsemen.com](http://www.mdhorsemen.com)

# 2018 Match Championship Series Stakes Schedule

## 3-Year-Old & Up Long - Dirt Division

5/26/18	Salvator Mile	G3	\$100,000	3YO & Up	1 Mile	Dirt	Monmouth Park
6/30/18	Philip H. Iselin Stakes	G3	\$100,000	3YO & Up	1 1/16 Mi.	Dirt	Monmouth Park
7/29/18	Monmouth Cup	G3	\$150,000	3YO & Up	1 1/8 Mi.	Dirt	Monmouth Park
8/25/18	DeBunda President's Cup		\$100,000	3YO & Up	1 1/16 Mi.	Dirt	Parx
9/16/18	Presque Isle Mile		\$200,000	3YO & Up	1 Mile	Dirt	Presque Isle Downs

## 3-Year-Old & Up Fillies and Mares Sprint - Dirt Division

5/18/18	Skipat Stakes		\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	6 Furlongs	Dirt	Pimlico
6/17/18	Regret Stakes		\$75,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	6 Furlongs	Dirt	Monmouth Park
7/7/18	Dashing Beauty Stakes		\$75,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	6 Furlongs	Dirt	Delaware Park
8/12/18	Satin & Lace Stakes		\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	6 Furlongs	Dirt	Presque Isle Downs
9/15/18	Roamin Rachel Stakes		\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	6 Furlongs	Dirt	Parx

## 3-Year-Old & Up Sprint - Turf Division

5/18/18	Jim McKay Turf Sprint		\$100,000	3YO & Up	5 Furlongs	Turf	Pimlico
6/2/18	PA Governor's Cup		\$200,000	3YO & Up	5 Furlongs	Turf	Penn National
7/7/18	Parx Dash Stakes	G3	\$200,000	3YO & Up	5 Furlongs	Turf	Parx
7/29/18	Wolf Hill Stakes		\$75,000	3YO & Up	5 1/2 Furlongs	Turf	Monmouth Park
9/15/18	Laurel Dash Stakes		\$100,000	3YO & Up	6 Furlongs	Turf	Laurel Park

## 3-Year-Old & Up Fillies and Mares Sprint - Turf Division

5/19/18	The Very One Stakes		\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	5 Furlongs	Turf	Pimlico
6/2/18	Penn Ladies Dash		\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	5 Furlongs	Turf	Penn National
7/7/18	Turf Amazon Stakes		\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	5 Furlongs	Turf	Parx
8/11/18	Incredible Revenge Stakes		\$75,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	5 1/2 Furlongs	Turf	Monmouth Park
9/15/18	Sensible Lady Turf Dash		\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	6 Furlongs	Turf	Laurel Park

## 3-Year-Old & Up Sprint - Dirt Division

5/19/18	Maryland Sprint Stakes	G3	\$150,000	3YO & Up	6 Furlongs	Dirt	Pimlico
6/17/18	Mr. Prospector Stakes		\$75,000	3YO & Up	6 Furlongs	Dirt	Monmouth Park
7/14/18	Hockessin Stakes		\$75,000	3YO & Up	6 Furlongs	Dirt	Delaware Park
8/12/18	Polynesian Stakes		\$100,000	3YO & Up	7 Furlongs	Dirt	Laurel Park
9/15/18	DeFrancis Memorial Dash	G3	\$250,000	3YO & Up	6 Furlongs	Dirt	Laurel Park

For complete rules, news, bonuses and detailed race information visit:

[\*\*matchseries.com\*\*](http://matchseries.com) 

### **Awards, From Page 1**

was voted Maryland-Bred Older Female—for \$25,000 in May, and she subsequently won three stakes.

"I'd like to thank all of the owners who believed in me, as well as my family and my staff," said Gonzalez, who was joined by a large group to accept his award.

Sagamore Farm, which won 31 races last year, more than half of them in Maryland, was voted Maryland Owner of the Year. Sagamore horses, all trained by Horacio DePaz, performed well in stakes company in Maryland and at other major meets around the country.

Hunter Rankin, appointed president of Sagamore Farm in 2016, credited owner Kevin

Plank for his investment in the historic property and its eventual rise as a racing and breeding operation.

"The idea was to bring this historic landmark in Maryland back to where it was meant to be," Rankin said. "We appreciate all the help people have given us over the years."

Toledo, the Maryland Jockey of the Year, won 144 races in the state last year to lead all riders. He easily captured the Laurel fall meet title with 61 wins and was aboard several stakes winners including Whirlin Curlin, who was voted champion Maryland-Bred 2-Year-Old Male.

Toledo, who is on the sidelines because of an injury suffered earlier this year, thanked all of the owners and trainers and his agent, Marty

Leonard, for his 2017 success.

The MTHA last fall solicited nominations for the Grooms of the Year at Laurel and Pimlico Race Course and selected Arturo Pinones for Laurel and Enrique Lopez for Pimlico. Pinones has worked for trainer Donald Barr for more than 20 years, while Lopez has been employed by trainer Ann Merryman for the past 14 years.

Pinones, a native of Mexico, said he appreciated the opportunity to attend the Renaissance Awards and brought along his wife and son. His daughter Diana was on hand as part of the MTHA team. Lopez, who returns to his native Mexico for a short time each winter, was unable to attend but Merryman has said he is an integral part of the operation.

# 2017 MTHA Horsemen's Awards



2017 Owner-of-the-Year  
Sagamore Farm



2017 Jockey-of-the-Year  
Jevian Toledo



2017 Trainer-of-the-Year  
Claudio Gonzalez



2017 Backstretch  
Worker-of-the-Year  
Arturo Pinones



**MTHA**

500 Redland Court, #105  
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117

**March 2018**

STANDARD  
PRE-SORT  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT #15  
WESTMINSTER, MD

## MTHA Golf Tournament Monday, April 16

Spring is right around the corner and that means one thing, the MTHA Spring Golf Tournament is upon us.



Compass Point G.C.  
Pasadena, Maryland  
Registration: 11am  
Tee Off: Noon

**\$65 per golfer. Contact Marty Leonard at (203) 733-1367**

## Board of Directors

Timothy L. Keefe, President  
Linda S. Gaudet, Vice President  
Dale Capuano, Vice President  
Michael F. Horning, Treasurer  
Katharine M. Voss, Secretary

A. Ferris Allen, III  
R. Larry Johnson  
JoAnn Hayden  
Mark B. Lapidus  
Robert T. Manfuso  
Hugh I. McMahon  
H. Graham Motion  
Charles J. Reed  
Philip B. Schoenthal  
Michael J. Trombetta