



The Horsemen's Newsletter

August 2018

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Groom Elite 101 Coming in Sept. to Laurel Park

Only a few months after successfully hosting its first entry-level Groom Elite program, Laurel Park in September will offer the popular Groom Elite 101 course.



Groom Elite 101 is a 40-hour certification course for horse care workers who have some experience at the racetrack but seek more comprehensive knowledge about horses and how to perform their jobs.

Groom Elite 099, held at Laurel for a week in June, is designed to transition hot walkers to grooms. It generated a good response and resulted in several trainers hiring students.

Groom Elite 101 is primarily a certification program for grooms. Over the course of two weeks, participants will cover a host of topics including the following:

- Horse behavior and the basics of grooming
- Conformation, leg structure and how horses travel
- Height and weight
- The horse's mouth
- Digestion and feeding guidelines
- Hay and why horses need it
- Equine health evaluation
- Front and rear leg analysis
- Bandaging a horse's legs
- The racehorse foot
- Equipment and tacking up
- Safety in the barn and at the racetrack
- Pre-race soundness exams and procedures in the holding and test barns

The MTHA and Groom Elite leader Dr. Reid McClellan have mapped out the following schedule for the Groom Elite 101 program at Laurel: Sept. 17-Oct. 11 (four weeks) on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Backstretch Appreciation Day

Monday, September 10, 1-4pm • Tent Beside Laurel Park Grandstand • All Are Welcome

All You Can Eat and Cash Prizes

The MTHA will celebrate the unsung heroes of the state's racing industry during its annual Backstretch Appreciation Day, which will be held Monday, Sept. 10.

The event, scheduled for 1-4 p.m., will be held under a tent on the racetrack apron at Laurel Park, which was the case the last few years.

The MTHA recognizes not only the hands-on care and attention backstretch workers provide racehorses on a daily basis, but also the unusual hours such jobs require. Family is a very important part of that equation, and the MTHA encourages workers to invite their family members for an afternoon of food, games, and cash giveaways.

The Maryland Jockey Club two years ago began offering cash prizes to Backstretch Appreciation Day attendees and will do

so again this year. Plans call for \$2,500 in cash to be awarded along with various door prizes.

Similar to last year, an all-you-can-eat barbecue featuring chicken, pit beef and ham, as well as a variety of salads and side dishes and non-alcoholic beverages will be available. The MTHA again has arranged for a DJ from Carlyle Entertainment to provide the sounds for the afternoon party.

If you're looking for a little exercise other than dancing, adults and children will be welcome to play horseshoes, cornhole and other games.

The Board and staff of the MTHA encourages all to attend to celebrate the work and dedication of those who work with our equine athletes on a daily basis throughout the year.



Expanded Out of Competition Testing Progressing

More than 200 out-of-competition drug tests have been performed in Maryland since March as part of an expanded program that includes overnight races.

Maryland Racing Commission Executive Director Mike Hopkins said the number of samples taken per racing day has varied from four to one or two. That doesn't include Preakness Stakes weekend, when far more samples were taken in stakes and graded stakes.

As of early July there had been no positives, Hopkins said. Results are generally received from Truesdail Laboratories in about a week.

"It's an ongoing program," Hopkins said. "From what I understand, no one has refused (to allow a sample to be taken). Once the horsemen understood what we're trying to accomplish, it became more accepted. We told them that with out-of-competition testing, we're not looking for therapeutic medications. It's about growth hormones, EPO and other prohibited substances."

Much of the testing in Maryland is done on a random selection basis that involves the stewards.

"We've also done some sampling for tracks in other states as well," Hopkins said. "There is cooperation among the racing jurisdictions."

The Delaware Thoroughbred Racing Commission last year conducted 211 out-of-competition tests, which made up roughly 12% of all equine drug testing. The total number of drug tests – more than 1,900 – doesn't include almost 400 pre-race tests for metabolic alkalosis, commonly called blood-gas tests.

Delaware Park last year hosted 81 days of racing. Maryland races year-round.

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



Purses for Maiden Special, Allowance Races to Increase

Beginning in September, purses for maiden special weight and allowance races at Laurel Park will increase by \$5,000 for the most part, according to the condition book that begins Sept. 7.

Maiden special weight races, which currently go for \$40,000, will increase to \$45,000. As for allowance races with the basic condition of non-winners of \$10,000 once, twice or three times "other than" will increase from \$42,000 to \$45,000; \$45,000 to \$50,000; and \$47,000 to \$53,000, respectively.

Purses for all other races, including Maryland-restricted maiden special weight events and waiver maiden-claiming events that allow Maryland-bred or -sired horses to race without a given claiming price, will remain the same.

Maryland Jockey Club President Sal Sinatra noted the waiver maiden-claiming events with tags of \$40,000-\$35,000 have proven popular – so much so that waiver-eligible horses are passing on open maiden special weight races. The waiver races carry a purse of \$33,000, or only \$7,000 less than a maiden special weight race at Laurel in the current condition book.

"We figure that with a \$12,000 difference in the purse between those two races, plus the 30% bonus, maybe they'll take a shot in the maiden special weight race," Sinatra said.

Maiden special weight races carry a 30% Maryland-bred bonus to the winner. Sinatra noted that the purse hike for maiden events required that allowance purses also be increased accordingly.

Meanwhile, the condition book for the Maryland State Fair at Timonium meet also is out. The seven-day meet will run from Aug. 25-Sept. 3.

Each Saturday during the meet will feature a stakes. New this year is the \$75,000 Timonium Distaff for fillies and mares, 3-year-olds and up, at 6½ furlongs on Aug. 25. It's a companion event to the \$75,000 Maryland Coalition Stakes that was inaugurated last year. The Coalition, for 3-year-olds and up at 6½ furlongs, is scheduled for Sept. 1.

The purse for each stakes is supported by \$50,000 from the MTHA and \$25,000 from the Maryland Horse Breeders Association.



Free Health Fair

Thursday, Sept. 27
9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Laurel Park Rec. Room

Services Include: Flu Shots, Cholesterol & Glucose Screenings, PSA and CMP Blood Screenings, Blood Pressure, Body Fat Composition and More.



Rec Report

Fall Golf Tournament

The next golf outing will be held at Compass Pointe Golf Course on Monday, Sept 17. Please mark it down on your calendars and call Marty Leonard at 203-733-1367 for further details.

MTHA Express Van Service

The MTHA sponsors a free van service for employees on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The service includes transportation for shopping, pharmacy, lunch, movies, doctor and dentist appointments, etc. You must sign up in the Laurel track kitchen each week for the service.

Our next day trip is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 27, when the van will be going to Annapolis. The van will be leaving the security gate at 11 a.m. and returning at about 6 p.m.

For information please call Dan at 410-802-5798.

Baseball Tickets

The winners for the most recent Orioles Ticket package were: 8/28: Avon Thorpe, 9/11: Kimber-Lynn McGee.

The final drawing for this season's tickets will be held on Friday, Aug. 10 in the track kitchen.

Baysox tickets remaining are for August, very few remaining, Call Dan 410-802-5798 for more info.

Soccer and Volleyball Coming This Fall at Laurel

The soccer league will be beginning in August and we're in the planning stages of organizing a Volleyball league. Get your friends together and see Marty Leonard to join in on the fun. Call 203-733-1367 if you have any questions.



Racing Commission Announces New Reporting Requirements for Trainers for Horses That Die

At the Safety and Welfare Committee meeting held on July 19, all the committee members endorsed the reporting of all horses that die due to illness or as a result of injury.

Therefore, effective immediately, all trainers are responsible to report to the Maryland Racing Commission State Veterinarian Dr. Elizabeth Daniel, within 72 hours, any horse under their care and custody that has died



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from an illness or has been euthanized because of an injury that was sustained during training or racing.

This includes any horse that has been removed from the grounds and subsequently dies from the illness or injury sustained at the track.

The reporting of these incidents includes all horses stabled at Laurel or Pimlico. A trainer not providing this information may be subject to a penalty.

Donations Helping Make Beyond The Wire Stronger

Maryland Thoroughbred racing's Beyond The Wire racehorse aftercare program, launched in May 2017, accepted 96 horses through the end of July of this year and has become a model program for other states.

Though the program receives dedicated funding from the MTHA, Maryland Horse Breeders Association, Maryland Jockey Club, horse owners, and jockeys, voluntary contributions from those who use the program are important as well. Statistics show the average cost to put a retired racehorse through the program is about \$2,400, which includes a stipend for the accredited partner farm, veterinary services and surgeries.

"Any amount is appreciated," said Jessica Hammond, administrator of the program. "It gets expensive because some horses need more time (than the usual time it takes to make the transition) – sometimes it can be nine months. We've had generous donations from a lot of people, and we also have people donating services such as shipping."

For instance, owner Phyllis Soboczenski, who races under the name Philmor Racing Stable, contributed \$10,000 to Beyond The Wire after one of her horses required surgery so it could move on to a productive second career. Soboczenski, who has horses with trainer Hugh McMahon, retired the

horse through the program, which she believes serves an important purpose when it comes to racehorse health and welfare.

"Mrs. Soboczenski's donation was extremely generous and will certainly help multiple horses," Hammond said. "It was really nice to have the program recognized and appreciated in that way."

"We're really proud of the program, and it is getting a lot of attention. People need to know it's a very functional, well-respected program."

The partner farms, located in Maryland and other states, are accredited through the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance, which has granted more than \$10.8 million to accredited organizations. Accreditation is determined based upon a review of operations, education, horse health care management, facility standards and adoption policies and protocols.

The TAA and other groups have noted the importance of retiring horses at the right time to facilitate the transition to second careers.

"Our accredited farm partners will take back a horse at any time for any reason," Hammond said. "But retiring nice, sound horses through the program is appreciated by us and the partner facilities."





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August 2018

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MTHA GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday, September 17, 2018
Compass Pointe Golf Club

Entry Fee \$60 Per Person Includes:

- 18-Hole Tournament with Cart
- Two Drink Coupons with Prizes
- \$500 Team Awards
- Two \$50 Closest to the Pin Awards
- One \$50 Longest Drive Award
- Call Marty Leonard at (203) 733-1367



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