



The Horsemen's f Newsletter

February 2019

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Match Series Returns in 2019 With A New Format

After a celebrated and highly successful return to the racing calendar last year, the MATCH Series (Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred Championships) will return in 2019, featuring a new format designed to encourage more participation from horsemen, brand the series as special event days at the participating race-tracks, and make it easier for the racing public to follow the series.

In a change to the historic scheduling of series races and a first for the series, each track will host a MATCH Series day and a race in each of the four MATCH divisions will be contested on the card that day. The 2019 series will debut at Laurel Park April 20. The series will then move to Hollywood Casino at Penn National Race Course June 1, Delaware Park July 13, Parx Racing Sept. 2, and conclude with Championship Day at Monmouth Park Sept. 28.

There will be four divisions: 3-Year Old & Up Sprint-Dirt Division; 3-Year Old & Up Sprint-Turf Division; 3-Year Old & Up Fillies and Mares Sprint-Dirt Division, and 3-Year Old & Up Fillies and Mares Long-Turf Division. Each division will have five stakes.

The purse for each series race will be \$100,000 with a total purse pool of \$2 million. Bonuses for owners and trainers will total \$375,000 with \$75,000 in divisional bonuses,

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Tickets On Sale Now For Maryland Renaissance Awards

The second Renaissance Awards dinner recognizing the best of Maryland racing and breeding is quickly approaching, so be sure to get your tickets as soon as possible.

The event will celebrate the top Maryland owner, trainer, jockey, breeder, broodmare and stallion, as well as the champion Maryland-bred horses of 2018. In addition, the MTHA will recognize its Backstretch Workers of the Year: Luis Barajas at Laurel Park and Gabriel Emmanuel at Pimlico Race Course.

The awards program will be held Tuesday, Feb. 12, at the American Visionary Art Museum at 800 Key Highway in Baltimore's Inner Harbor from 6-10 p.m. Tickets, priced at \$150 per person or \$1,000 for a table of 10, can be purchased online at marylandthoroughbred.com.

Tickets will not be mailed. Those who purchase tickets will have their names left at the door.

The Baltimore band Black Tie will provide music throughout the evening's festivities and dancing after dinner.

The Renaissance Awards were created to recognize the best of Maryland racing and breeding from the previous year and are a cooperative effort among the Maryland Horse Breeders Association, Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and Maryland Jockey Club.

Finalists for the awards categories have been released. The human categories are Owner of the Year, Trainer of the Year and Jockey of the Year. Breeder of the Year, already selected by the MHBA, is Sycamore Hall Thoroughbreds, which is owned by Richard Golden.

The equine categories are 2-year-old male and female, 3-year-old male and female, 4-year-old and up male and female, sprinter, turf runner and steeplechaser. Horse of the Year will be announced after those awards are presented.

Broodmare of the Year is Casual Kiss, owned and bred by Charles and Cynthia McGinnes, and Stallion of the Year is Great Notion, who stands at Northview Stallion Station.



Injury Review Protocol Expanded

Maryland racing industry stakeholders are widening the scope of an Injury Review Board that will collect and analyze information on catastrophic breakdowns.

The plan was discussed Jan. 17 during a meeting of the Safety and Welfare Committee, which falls under the Maryland Racing Commission. Catastrophic injuries will be the focus, though any horse death could be subject to a review.

MRC Executive Director Mike Hopkins said the commission has been collecting data on breakdowns for several years, but it would be

beneficial to have a larger board regularly examine cases from all perspectives. "We're expanding the current review process to more of a formal basis. This is effectively immediately," he said.

Dr. Elizabeth "Libby" Daniel, the MRC Equine Welfare and Medical Director and chief state veterinarian, will oversee the board's activities as part of her duties. Daniel was officially named Equine Welfare and Medical Director in the fall of 2018.

Board representatives will include Hopkins; Dr. Kelly Walsh, a MRC veterinarian; Georganne

Hale, Maryland Jockey Club Vice President of Racing Development; MJC racing secretary Chris Merz; David Hayden, a member of the MRC; Chris Bosley, the track superintendent; a representative of the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen Association; a steward; and the trainer, jockey and veterinarian associated with the horse being examined.

"We support any group that tries to lessen catastrophic injuries," MJC President Sal Sinatra said. "As we go forward, this can leave out some anecdotal things. Best practices can be employed through the work of this group."

➔ Match Series

\$50,000 to the overall series winning owner and \$25,000 to the winning trainer. In addition, there will be breeder's bonuses totaling \$40,000.

"We were thrilled by the successful return of the MATCH Series in 2018," said Alan Foreman, creator of the MATCH Series and Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association. "Despite the most challenging weather conditions in Mid-Atlantic history, the series exceeded all of our expectations and we are proud and excited to bring it back. We learned a lot in our return last year and have tried to make changes that are the product of numerous conversations with series participants, horsemen, track management and fans.

"We think the 2019 series will be a credit to Mid-Atlantic racing and generate tremendous interest and enthusiasm throughout the racing industry. MATCH is an enormous undertaking and the remarkable collaborative effort of all of the MATCH partners is unprecedented in the industry."

Horses competing in MATCH Series divisions earn points per race 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,



win lucrative bonuses. In addition, the breeders of each competing colt/gelding and fillies/mares earn points with the breeders earning bonuses for horses that win their division.

The participating organizations are the Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and its affiliates in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania; Maryland Jockey Club (Laurel Park); Delaware Park; Greenwood Gaming

and Entertainment (Parx); Penn National Gaming Inc. (Hollywood Casino at Penn National Race Course); Darby Development (Monmouth Park); Pennsylvania Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association; Maryland Horse Breeders Association; Pennsylvania Horse Breeders Association; Thoroughbred Breeders Association of New Jersey; and Delaware Certified Thoroughbred Program.

Reyes Returns To MTHA

The MTHA welcomes back Carmen Reyes, who for more than 10 years was employed as an assistant at Maryland's Thoroughbred racetracks.

Reyes is now working part-time as an assistant to Diana Pinones, Racetrack Operations Director for the MTHA.

Reyes, a native of Chile, worked in the barn of Maryland trainer Vinnie Blengs for more than 20 years before she took the job with the MTHA in 2001. She will perform many of the functions she did during her earlier time with the horsemen's organization.

"I helped the backstretch people and the trainers, and also helped the jockeys with work-



ers' compensation matters," Reyes said. "It was more or less the same thing then that we are doing now (in the office)."

Through her work with horses and stable employees, Reyes developed a connection with the people who care for racehorses.

"I had a passion for them," she said. "It was also good that I was bilingual, and at times I would help translate.

There have been changes (in the industry), but changes are good, too."

As part of her position, Reyes will assist Pinones with the Horsemen's Health System, which provides medical services for backstretch employees, trainers, jockeys, and Maryland Jockey Club employees.

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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 contribution has been significantly increased to \$750,000 this year, which is distributed among all participants.

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 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, is 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.



Sinatra Addresses Concerns About Barns

The Maryland Jockey Club is in the process of upgrading barns and other infrastructure on the Laurel Park backstretch as part of a company master plan that includes a rebuild of the Bowie Training Center, work on which could begin this year.

The MJC provided the Maryland Racing Commission with an update on the work during the regulatory agency's Jan. 24 meeting. MRC, a few months ago, requested regular updates on the master plan, which encompasses ongoing renovations to the Laurel Park grandstand and clubhouse.

After discussions with the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, The Stronach Group, which owns the MJC tracks, agreed not to build more tent barns, three of which were constructed at Laurel. MJC President Sal Sinatra told the MRC that new barns—at Laurel or Bowie—would be “block or steel,” and that the company would find other uses for the existing ones.

The ongoing work won't be impacted by the status of Pimlico Race Course, which is the subject of a Maryland Stadium Authority report that was again discussed Jan. 23 during a Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee briefing on the state of the Maryland horseracing industry. Sinatra noted that the second phase of the report makes no provisions for year-round stabling of horses at Pimlico.

“Bowie is in play,” Sinatra said. “We're hopeful that in the next 30 days to decide if Bowie goes first or Laurel goes first.”

“We met with the MJC crew on a rehabilitation plan (for the Laurel barn area) and they laid out a plan to do one barn at a time,” MTHA Executive Director David Richardson said at the racing commission meeting. “It's an ongoing process, and we are working closely with the racetrack. There has been a lot of progress and the relationship is vastly improved. But we're still faced with the challenges of an aging backstretch.”



2018/19 MTHA Backstretch Pension

Sign Up Schedule:

Pension Plan Registration for the plan year 2018 will take place at the following times and locations. Bring your MRC Badge and W-2, 1099, or tax return for 2018. For more information call the MTHA office at (410) 902-6842.

April 22 through April 26

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

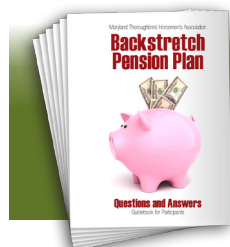
April 29 through May 3

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

May 6 through May 10

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

Failure to register will result in the loss of your 2018 benefit.



Stop in the MTHA Racetrack Office or visit mdhorsemen.com for a copy of the MTHA Backstretch Pension Plan Guidebook to answer all your questions about the Plan.

*Don't
Forget
About
Uncle
Sam*



Tax time is here. The MTHA will assist backstretch workers and trainers to prepare and file their state and federal tax returns.

An appointment is required. Stop in the MTHA racetrack office during live racing from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. or call 410-902-6843 to schedule.



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