

PONIES 24-7

VOLUME 11 / ISSUE 1 / 2025
\$2.95 CDN

Brad Cox

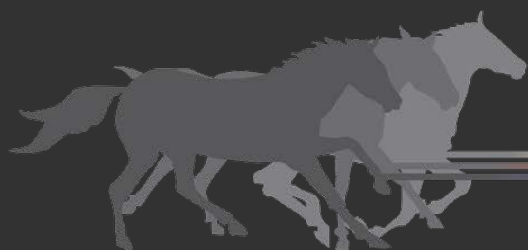
One Of North America's
Leading Thoroughbred Trainers

James MacDonald

Multiple O'Brien Award Winning
Harness Driver

The Racer's Edge

A Handicapping Primer - A Question
of Saving Your Investment! When Is
An Opinion, An Opinion?



PONIES 24-7

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- JUNE 1: 3 Year Old Filly Pace
- JUNE 6: 3 Year Old Filly Trot
- JULY 13: 2 Year Old Filly Trot
- JULY 20: 2 Year Old Filly Pace
- AUGUST 10: 2 Year Old Colt Trot
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AT THE POST



WELCOME BACK!

Welcome back to another great issue of PONIES 24-7, the first for the 2025 racing season. Well, you could say that it's been quite a ride since last November when our 'Ponies 24-7, THE RADIO MAGAZINE' Show became exclusive to FM101, Orangeville, FM101 Milton, and FM 92 South Simcoe, with live streaming on demand at

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With the move to three stations, we initially thought that there would be a slight 'bump' in our listenership for the Radio Show, however the recent numbers to say the least, have been quite overwhelming. As we turned into 2025, our reach numbers, quickly hit 'North' of 160,000, a number that includes both live listeners and those that are streaming the Saturday morning broadcast on the three stations and still at an 8 am Eastern time slot.

AND PEOPLE SAID THAT FM RADIO WAS DEAD!

On the contrary, we believe that there is something to be said for terrestrial radio which comes with its own advantages- easier accessibility for the

listener, there is a nostalgic connection with people, it remains a great medium for advertising and best of all, FM Radio is free for those tuning in!

From its new homes, 'Ponies 24-7, THE RADIO MAGAZINE', continues to introduce the great sport of horse racing to a plethora of new listeners on Saturday mornings and now in our fifth season, the show offers 60 minutes of action-packed interviews, handicapping selections and informative content for horse racing fans everywhere. We also remain the only Canadian FM Radio Show, covering the sport of horse racing and one of only a few shows across North America.

In the meantime, please enjoy this edition of our PONIES 24-7 digital magazine and some more, great editorial content, including interviews with top North American Thoroughbred Trainer Brad Cox, Leading Canadian Harness Driver James MacDonald and Woodbine Thoroughbred Owner Mary Self.

Until next time,

Larry Simpson
theponies247experience@gmail.com

EDITOR Larry Simpson

Larry Simpson is an avid and passionate writer, horseplayer, handicapper, and marketer for both Thoroughbred and Standardbred racing. He has published and edited several horse racing journals, conducted handicapping seminars for both breeds and is a major proponent for the education of new racing fans through publications like PONIES 24-7 and initiatives like 'Ponies 24-7, THE RADIO MAGAZINE', that develop 'fresh' demographics for racing, assist in educating bettors and promoting the value of the horse racing lifestyle experience.



LIVING THE HORSE RACING LIFESTYLE

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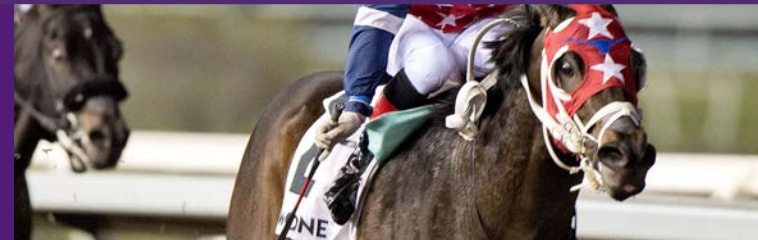
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ABOUT THE COVER

Fair Grounds' Hodges Photography catching the Brad Cox trained Disco Time winning the recent Lecomte Stakes.



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In Conversation with Larry Simpson

BRAD COX

One Of North America's Leading Thoroughbred Trainers

Photos by Hodges Photography



It was only natural that being born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, that Brad Cox was going to find his way to working within the Thoroughbred industry. He started out working for noted Trainer's Burk Kessinger and Jimmy Baker and later became an Assistant to Dallas Stewart, but in 2004 he made the move to go out on his own and won his first race as a Trainer. With over 2,500 wins and Purse Earnings of over \$195 million so far since then, Brad has perennially ranked near the top of the North American Leaderboard since 2016 in wins and money won and is recognized as one of North America's most successful trainers presently, with a career to date that has netted him two Eclipse Awards for Top Trainer, two Kentucky Derby wins and 11 Breeders Cup races, including one in the Breeders Cup Classic. Recently, Brad joined 'Ponies 24-7, THE RADIO MAGAZINE' Show for the first time and the following interview transpired.

PONIES 24-7: Well Brad welcome to the show for the first time, let's start with where did it all begin for you and how did you become so involved in the business of Training horses?

BRAD COX: I grew up near Churchill Downs and was introduced to the racetrack at an early age and I just fell in love with the sport early on. As I got older, I just couldn't see myself doing anything else but working in the Thoroughbred business.

PONIES 24-7: Was there someone that took you 'under their wing' and helped 'show you the ropes'?

BRAD COX: I originally started out working as a Hot Walker for several Trainers early on and they all spent time with me and taught me so many things about the business. At that point in my life I was like a sponge, trying to absorb as much as I could about the horse racing business to the point that I just wanted to show up for work each day and learn as much as I could about the business as I loved what I was doing. Actually, I probably would have worked for free at that point lol, but it was important for me to just take it all in and learn and figure out the best way on how to win races!

PONIES 24-7: So, when you started out in the business Brad, did you set any goals for yourself?

BRAD COX: Honestly, to 'walk hots', start there and then hang out with the grooms and try to figure out basic horsemanship. When you like something, I find that you tend to retain the knowledge better and for me, I'm not going to say that it was easy to learn, but it was something I wanted to do and I put in the time. I liked spending all day at the barn, taking it all in and mentally think to myself, *'If I ever become a Trainer, this is how I'm going to do it!'* Throughout the years, much of that changes though, as it is just like going to school, where you teach yourself something and once again absorb what you are learning and seeing.

PONIES 24-7: Did you have family in the business Brad?

BRAD COX: I didn't, I just grew up at the track as my father used to take me a lot, he liked horse racing but he wasn't involved with the horses. He did like to bet on them a bit, not on a major scale though, but he introduced me to horse racing and to become a fan and obviously I became much more involved in the sport and ended up working with the horses.

PONIES 24-7: Let's talk about your Training career now, so far you have won over 2,500 races with purse earnings of over \$195 million, is there anything that you haven't accomplished so far?

BRAD COX: Lots, lots (*Laughs*), there is a lot to be done and still some unfinished business. Look Larry,

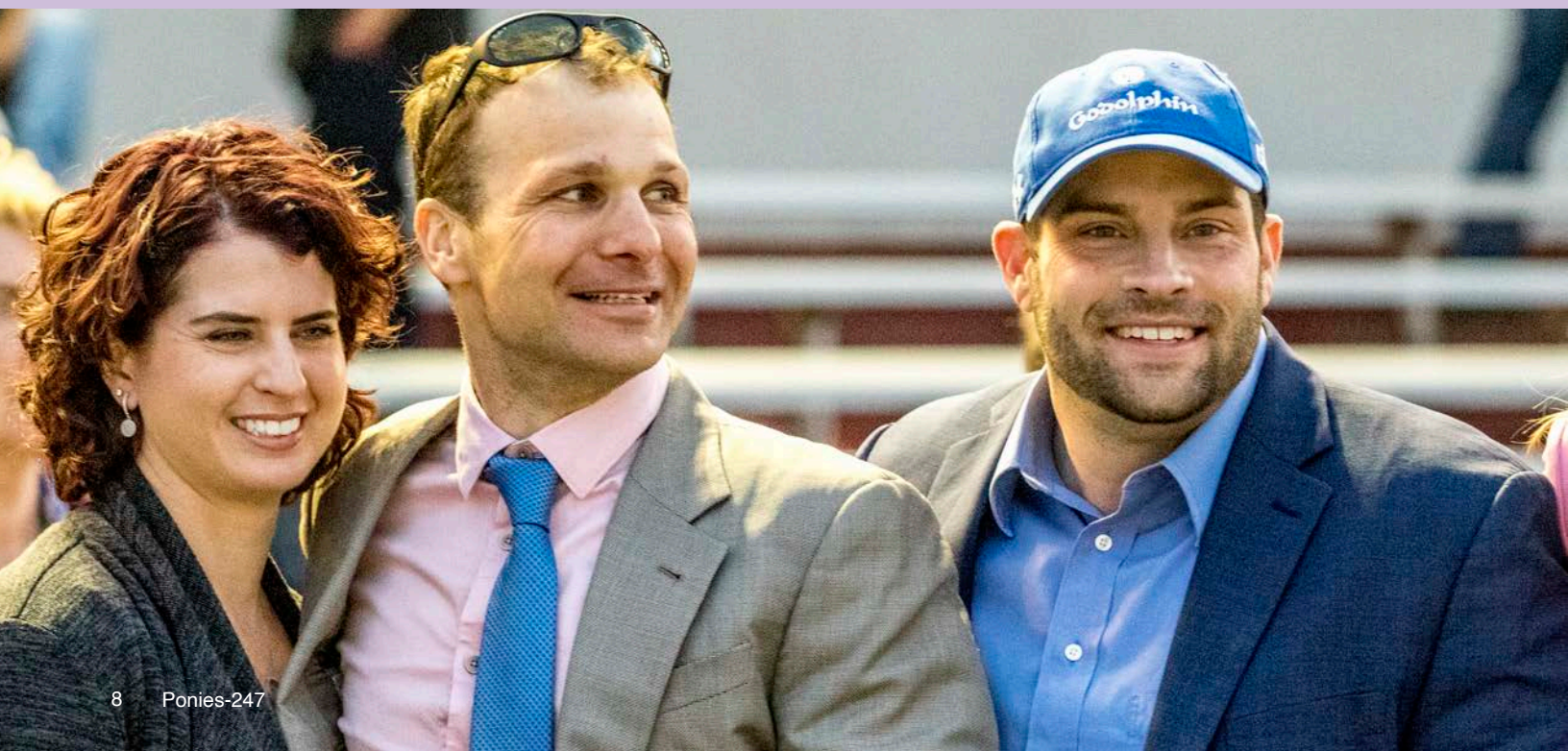
I am very proud of what our team has accomplished so far, all those numbers, it's 'all team'. It's just like Bill Belichick winning Super Bowls with the Patriots, it's the same thing and comes down to being part of a successful team. We have a lot of good horses spread out at various tracks and we employ great people at these places. It's no different than the other great Trainers in North America, as they too are spread out in several places, but you got to have great help and that is what it all comes down to. But back to the original question Larry, sure there's plenty more that we want to accomplish, we definitely want to win more Triple Crown races, another Derby would be nice, the Preakness, Belmont, more Grade 1's, and obviously Breeders Cup races.

PONIES 24-7: Where did you win your first race as a Trainer and how did it feel after that first win, maybe a sense of relief?

BRAD COX: (*Laughs*), yeah I suppose so, it was a second starter, a filly named Win Lucky Storm and I believe it was December 4th, 2004 at Turfway Park. Joe Johnson rode the filly and yes it was a good feeling to win that first one. She was stabled at Churchill, she was shipped to Turfway that day and made the drive home. Well let's say that I will never forget the drive home, it was a long time ago but I remember it like it was yesterday as it was very special.

PONIES 24-7: It certainly made the drive home a little sweeter, right?

BRAD COX: Yeah it really did!



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PONIES 24-7: I want to talk about a couple of your horses that recently raced, first Disco Time, who won the Lecomte Stakes recently and looks like he could be one of your Kentucky Derby horses, would you agree?

BRAD COX: Well, we are hoping to have a few Derby horses as that only increases your chances of winning, but Disco Time is a good colt and I do think that he has a great mind and he should get a mile and a quarter. We have decided to just give him one more prep, not sure which one right now, but he is doing well and I am looking forward to giving him one more opportunity. I think he currently has 20 points right and with one more good run we should be able to get him there for the first Saturday in May.

PONIES 24-7: Well, you had to be impressed with his race in the Lecomte, speed was carrying that day and he closed well over a sloppy surface?

BRAD COX: For sure, he broke from the outside too and there's a lot to be said for these horses that

are able to win races running against 10 or more horses as opposed to some of the smaller fields you see throughout the Country and obviously I'm not knocking those horses, but the Kentucky Derby is a given, that it is going to be run with 18 or more horses. Any time you have these horses that are winning races with larger fields, I believe that it helps to get your confidence up on the trail to the Kentucky Derby.

PONIES 24-7: Let's talk about another one of your horses, Saudi Crown who raced recently in the Pegasus Invitational at Gulfstream. What happened? Did he just get tired?

BRAD COX: Yes I think there might have been a little too much pace early but Florent (Geroux) did a great job of putting him into a great position where I thought he could actually win the race, but obviously Saudi Crown just wasn't up for it. The winner had a great trip and actually it was like watching the Breeders Cup Classic of 2023 again as White Abarrio was very good that day and he was good again at Gulfstream.

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Look Larry, White Abarrio is a very, very good horse and I think is a Grade 1 horse week in, week out and Saudi Crown has only won a single Grade 1 so far and things kind of went his way that day. But he has the ability to win a Grade 1 in the future, however things would just have to stack up a little bit better for him.

PONIES 24-7: Have you any plans for Saudi Crown, where we may see him again?

BRAD COX: I don't right now, I think I am going to hit the reset button for a bit, he did come out of the Pegasus in good order, but he will probably come back in a Stake, but not a Grade 1. We are trying to win another Grade 1 with him sometime this year, but it won't be his next start.

PONIES 24-7: You just mentioned Flo Geroux, who I might add is a good Friend of the Show and you and Flo have had really great success, your win percentage together is around 27%, how would you describe Flo as a rider and what is it that makes the two of you such a high percentage successful team?

BRAD COX: Well, Flo helps us out quite a bit in the mornings and obviously in the afternoons as well and he really loves his job and he loves racing. We are also good friends, but Flo is a great rider and we kind of see racing the same way on an eye to eye basis. Both of us follow the industry quite a bit. and I really have a good rapport with Flo and we just seem to work well together.

PONIES 24-7: Here's a tough question for you, best horse you have trained so far and why?

BRAD COX: Woa! Oh wow, that's really, really tough, I actually have to think about who I'm going to offend or not offend, lol.

PONIES 24-7: Well, let me throw one name out, Mandaloun.

BRAD COX: He was good but probably a horse that I would say was the best horse I ever trained and led over in the afternoon that I always felt I was going to get an 'A' effort from was Monomoy Girl to be honest with you. When you led her over she just gave you this feeling that she was going to run a race today. Honestly, there were a couple times that she didn't cross the wire and not in front, but when you look at her race record, I think she was beaten three times and they were all just very narrow losses. Actually she was beaten twice and 'DQed' once and I believe

there was only twice that a horse crossed the wire in front of her and it was a very narrow defeat. Monomoy Girl was just unbelievable and I would say that she was the best horse that I ever had the opportunity to train.

PONIES 24-7: How many horses do you have in training now and where are they training?

BRAD COX: We have about 150 with the most at Payson Park in Florida . We also have a pretty good sized string at the Fair Grounds, some at Turfway, Belmont and Oaklawn.

PONIES 24-7: We talked about Disco Time earlier about a possible Kentucky Derby horse, talk about some of your other three-year-olds.

BRAD COX: Sure, we have Patch Adams, he was fourth in the Southwest but he didn't race as well as we expected him to but he came out of it in good order. Tappan Street who was second in the Holy Bull at Gulfstream, is also a nice colt and the further they go the better for him and he should like the mile and a quarter distance if he gets the opportunity in the Kentucky Derby, Rapture is an Uncle Mo colt who broke his Maiden last time out at Oaklawn and we think the further the better for him as well. Flavian Prat rode him for us and he really liked him. Those are four colts that look like they want to go long. We have a good group of colts but like everyone they have to keep improving as the year goes on.

PONIES 24-7: Last question for you Brad, this is a new twist we have added to the Radio Show where we get you to finish this sentence- If I didn't become a Trainer I would probably be a?

BRAD COX: I'm going to say a Coach of some kind, probably basketball or baseball. I always said for years that I wanted to be a Bloodstock Agent, but I don't know whether I would be any good at that, lol, so I think I will stick with Coaching as my answer. I Coached baseball with my oldest son and we had some really good baseball teams and I enjoyed it, but obviously it did take away from training which is literally my career and I kind of felt at the time that I needed to focus on training horses if I was going to try to be a success at it.

PONIES 24-7:v Perfect! Brad thanks for doing this and good luck in 2025 going forward.



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PLAY IT AGAIN...

Originally Heard On 'Ponies 24-7', THE RADIO MAGAZINE

In Conversation with Larry Simpson

JAMES MACDONALD

Multiple O'Brien Award Winning Harness Driver

Photos by New Image Media



Note- 'Ponies 24-7, THE RADIO MAGAZINE' currently is the only terrestrial radio show about horse racing in Canada and one of only a handful of shows in the U.S. In November, 2024, the show moved to a new Broadcasting Company, Radio Labs, where the show now airs Saturday mornings for one full hour at 8:00 a.m. Eastern on FM 101 Milton, FM 101 Orangeville and FM 92 South Simcoe. The show is live streamed at MiltonNow.ca, OrangevilleToday.ca or SouthSimcoeToday.ca and if you miss an episode, stream it on Spotify, Apple Music and several other popular platforms.

As a regular magazine feature, we are offering transcripts of pertinent guest interviews, previously heard on 'Ponies 24-7, THE RADIO MAGAZINE'.

PONIES 24-7: Well, we are pleased to be joined by Woodbine Mohawk Park Driver, James MacDonald, who once again had another record breaking season at the Campbellville oval, James welcome back to the show. I have to say though that you did it again with another major winning and record breaking season in 2024 and you became the first Driver ever, to record three 400 win seasons, plus you also had record purse earnings of over \$12.7 million on the year, so let me ask you, it's 2025 now, what are you planning to do for an encore?

JAMES MACDONALD: *(Laughs)*, well thank you very much Larry, first and foremost, but as for an encore, I believe I was on your show last year and I said the same thing, that I'm just

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going to try to do it all over again. I don't set goals or anything like that, instead I just want to show up at the racetrack every night with a good attitude and kind of a winning mindset . As an example, if I'm in a good mood and things are going well, or even not well, at least I brought a good attitude to work and that will hopefully translate to success.

PONIES 24-7: James, who do you take after then, is there a family member who is much like you?

JAMES MACDONALD: That's actually a good question, we are all similar, but very different in our own way. I think I kind of get my cool and calm demeanor from my brother Curtis though, who I am closest in age with. As far as competitiveness, we are all the exact same and just about do anything it takes to win!

PONIES 24-7: You are also named a finalist for the O'Brien Award for leading driver in Canada, (note after radio show airing, James actually won the O'Brien for leading Driver again in 2024, his fourth award), you are no stranger to the O'Brien's, having won the award three times but you were also nominated as a finalist for the Dan Patch for leading driver in the US, which was won by Dexter Dunn, what was it like to be one of the finalists for this award?

JAMES MACDONALD: To me it was unbelievable and a complete shock to be nominated for U.S. Driver of the Year. It was not something that I ever dreamed of and I think I remember saying something about it last year and I just kind of laughed it off. It's just a different ball game, there's so many Stakes races in the U.S. and the Drivers travel all over the country to compete basically every week and for me not driving full time on the Grand Circuit, but to get a nomination was something that I'm really proud of. Dexter Dunn deserved the award, for what he has done on the track the past few years and just to be mentioned and recognized on that level is like I said something I'm going to be very proud of for a very long time.

PONIES 24-7: James, talk about Dexter Dunn for a minute, I know in past interviews you have said that he is one of the top drivers that you have ever driven against, what is it that makes Dexter such a great Harness Driver?

JAMES MACDONALD: Actually Larry, I think if we knew the answer, we would all be great like him (*laughs*), but honestly, I think that Dexter is just a special talent and he's a special guy, as anyone who has ever met him will see that he has just this terrific personality which draws everyone in. I always say to people that Dexter is so good, he is almost cheering

for you to beat him, but you just can't! He's such a nice guy too and he gets along very well with everyone and has somehow found a balance between, you know how they say that *'nice guys finish last'*, well he's found a way to *'make nice guys finish first'*, all the time! Just to get to race against him over the last few years has been just an honor.

PONIES 24-7: And not just with Dexter but other Drivers, there is a certain amount of respect between yourself and the other Drivers and of course, between the other Drivers themselves, correct?

JAMES MACDONALD: Absolutely, I always say that people get annoyed because the Driver's get along so well, but I think that we all have our *'spats'* throughout the year, but just like you said, I think we all have so much respect for each other, that I enjoy watching Dexter or some of the other top Drivers compete, be it in Canada or the States. When a Driver does something on the track that is extra special, I have no problem giving the recognition that they deserve, because I know how difficult it is to win and just how little separates a good drive from a bad drive. Just to be on the same racetrack with some of the great Drivers in North America, has been a great thrill for me.

PONIES 24-7: Who are some of the Drivers that you are close with?

JAMES MACDONALD: Obviously in Canada, Doug McNair, Louis Roy, Bob McClure, Jody Jamieson, I'm pretty close with the four of them and in the States, Yannick Gingras, we are pretty close friends and a few years back we went away together with our wives. Probably Dexter and Todd and when I'm in the U.S. we try to find the time to have a couple of sociable beers together or maybe a dinner. I like to think that I get along with everyone and I would be happy to have a drink with any of the Drivers when they are available.

PONIES 24-7: I want to talk about how you prepare yourself for a race night of driving, do you have a special routine or regime that you go through?

JAMES MACDONALD: Not really, I like to have my afternoon nap which is kind of the go-to when it isn't golf season, but even when I golf, I like to tee off earlier. It also depends on the horses because my wife and I have a couple that we train together . I like to get up and do something productive, like maybe go to the barn and then possibly golf and also try to squeeze in my nap in and then head for the track to





prepare for the night's races and do my thing. Other than that, I don't do anything superstitious or odd!

PONIES 24-7: Does the routine change though James when you are in the U.S. and driving in a major Stakes race?

JAMES MACDONALD: No, it pretty much stays the same Larry, it doesn't really matter if it is a Stakes or an Overnight, actually when I was younger and I was driving in a Stakes race, I let too much 'get into my head' and I worried too much about the race. Now, I have reached the point where it is just another race night obviously you do have to prepare for the race and read the Program, but you don't sit and stare at the Program for hours on end. You just have to do your routine, treat it like another race and try to bring the most positive vibes with you to the track that night and to the race itself. Also, you need to stay positive and don't get into a rut because of a bad drive and the quicker you can get out of this mindset, the better off you are.

PONIES 24-7: Growing up James, did you have a so called driving idol that you respected and if so why?

JAMES MACDONALD: Honestly, my brother's Mark and Anthony were definitely my idols! Watching them

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April

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JULY 12

T-shirt giveaway, mechanical shark, food trucks, DJ, Cornhole Contest and more.

August

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AUGUST 2

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of harness racing's greatest day! \$1,000 Hambo hat contest, carnival rides, live music and more. \$5 admission includes baseball cap.

September

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FIRST POST 6:20 P.M. FIRST POST 12 NOON



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race, they were so helpful and still are . Mark will call me before a big race like the North America Cup or the Meadowlands Pace and I will pretty much ‘pick his brain’ and ask him what is he seeing when he is analyzing this race and does it differ from what I see, as sometimes it just helps to have another set of eyes. My brother Mark is one of the most prepared people when it comes to a big Stakes race as well as knowing the horses and the other Drivers in the race. Both Mark and Anthony are definitely my idols and maybe if I had to pick one non-family member, it would probably be John Campbell. There were other Drivers I would watch too, Brian Sears in the U.S. and in Canada Paul MacDonell and Rick Zeron, as Rick was actually very helpful when I was starting out as a Driver. Rick has this big personality and he found a nice balance of joking and teasing around with me, but would also take me on the side and it would be

something like, ‘Hey, I noticed you are doing this, maybe try doing it this way!’ Rick was always very respectful and helpful and I will never forget what he did for me!

PONIES 24-7: It’s funny you mention your brother Mark, when he was on this Show, I asked him who was the best Driver in the MacDonald family and he said that he was (*laughs*), actually he wouldn’t ‘bite’ to be honest with you, but seriously James, how did Harness Racing become the ‘family business’?

JAMES MACDONALD: We grew up on a farm in PEI and my Dad had a horse farm and was always really involved in Harness Racing. When I was a kid, he liked going to the track with his buddies and my mother took the pictures at the Racetrack, so we were pretty much engulfed in the business as kids. Mark



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and Anthony were just totally obsessed from the time they were young and my brother Curtis and I were a little standoffish towards racing at the beginning, we were around it but not too involved. Finally, I got into the business when Mark and Anthony were jogging and training horses in their early teens, but I didn't get really involved until my late teens.

PONIES 24-7: Well James, finish this sentence for me, If I didn't become a Harness Driver, I probably would be a--?

JAMES MACDONALD: Maybe a School Teacher! I always had dreams of teaching kids, as I love working with kids and that was always the job I wanted to do when I was younger. I didn't go to school for it though, I did take a year of Marketing and Advertising as a 19-year-old that was trying to figure everything out, but I think if I had to do something else and it's too late now, (Laughs), it would be a teacher.

PONIES 24-7: But I doubt you would make the money you are now, lol!

JAMES MACDONALD: (Laughs), right!

PONIES 24-7: Last question for you James, best horse you have driven so far and why?

JAMES MACDONALD: That is a very difficult question.

PONIES 24-7: That's why I saved it to the end.

JAMES MACDONALD: Probably my favorite horse to drive was So Much More. She is just a complete warrior, not the most 'gifted' horse I ever sat behind, but she just finds a way to win and if the race was a war, she would win every time. She was just tougher than all of the rest and wanted it more and if she got close to the leaders turning for home, it was almost a certainty that she was going to get her nose on the wire first ! I will go with So Much More, but the most talented horse was and it is probably not even close, Legendary Hanover! He was a complete 'speed demon' and he made quarters in 25 seconds feel like 30 seconds

PONIES 24-7: Well James congratulations on the great 2024 season and good luck going forward this year and we will need to have you back on the show again and talk about your 2025 season exploits.

JAMES MACDONALD: Well, thanks for having me and anytime!

Rocket Ship

RACING

GAME CHANGERS: NO MORE OPTIONS

By Chris Lomon, Woodbine

TORONTO, February 10, 2025 – Once a week, from January to April, Woodbine will profile a horse who had a life-changing impact on one of their closest connections in 2024.

This week, owner and breeder Mary Self and No More Options.

Self, the daughter of Woodbine trainer Zeljko Krcmar, is heavily involved and invested in horse racing, including as a Thoroughbred owner. In 2020, Self started the season with six horses. By the end of that campaign, she had four – one was claimed, another became a show jumper. *“I buy at the sale or privately. I’m not a big-time buyer, owner or breeder. I do it the best I can.”*

Make No Mistake, a Kentucky-bred daughter of Raison d’Etat, has won 15 races and recorded nearly \$250,000 in purse earnings for Self.

NO MORE OPTIONS

Foaled: March 19, 2021

Sire: Frac Daddy

Dam: Stoney Miss

Starts: 15

Wins-Seconds-Thirds: 5-0-5

Earnings: \$246,8089 (U.S.)

Notable races: Won the 2023 Frost King Stakes. Won the 2024 Lake Ontario Stakes. Was third in the 2023 Coronation Futurity Stakes and third in the 2024 Queenston Stakes.

Trainer: Zeljko Krcmar

Owner: Mary Self

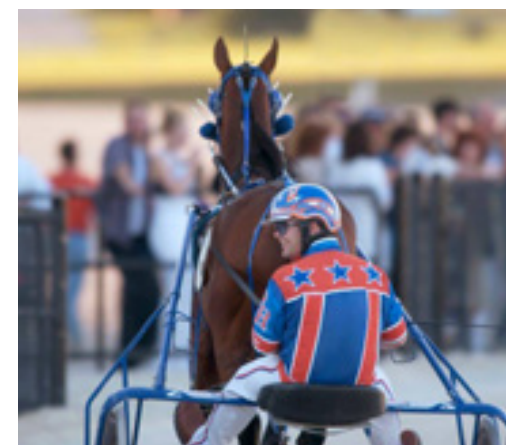
Groom: Henry Miller

Breeder: Laurel A. Byrne



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Ajax Downs, Ajax, ON

2 THOROUGHBRED TRACKS
Fort Erie Race Track, Fort Erie, ON | **Woodbine Race Track**, Toronto, ON

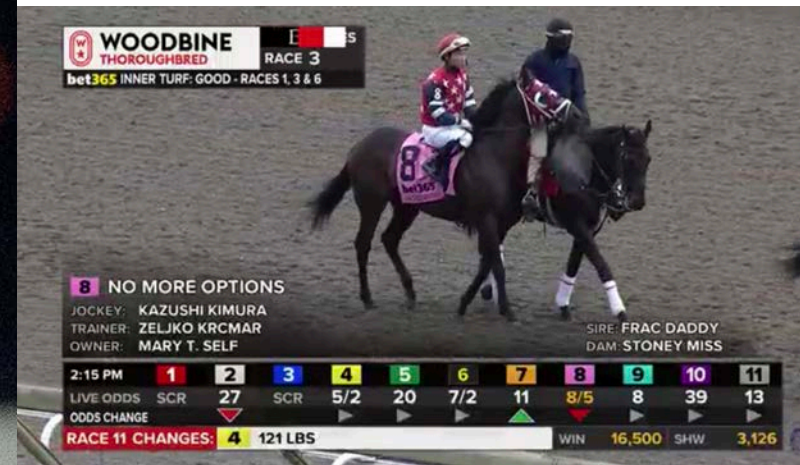
12 STANDARD BRED TRACKS
Clinton Raceway, Clinton, ON | Dresden Raceway, Dresden, ON | Flamboro Downs, Dundas, ON | Georgian Downs, Innisfil, ON | Grand River Raceway, Elora, ON | Hanover Raceway, Hanover, ON | Hiawatha Horse Park & Entertainment Center, Sarnia, ON | Kawartha Downs, Frasersville, ON | Leamington Raceway, Leamington, ON | Rideau Carleton Raceway, Ottawa, ON | The Raceway At Western Fair District, London, ON | Woodbine Mohawk Park, Campbellville, ON

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ontarioracing.com



Michael Burns Photo



to be watching the race at our table of four in the restaurant at Woodbine – it was incredible. I knew he could do it, but I can't say I knew he would win that day. In his mind, he's not a racehorse. He's out there having fun. Clearly, I didn't know how great he is."

"In his last race of the year, (Steady Growth Stakes, Dec. 15), he finished third and lost by just over a half-length. He had a 96 Beyer rating. I keep going back to how he doesn't know how good he is."

What did it mean to have a horse trained by your father run in the 2024 King's Plate?

"I wanted my dad to be in this race. How many times does an opportunity to be in this race come along? It was a wonderful opportunity for my family. My dad is in his 80's and this won't come along again. To share every moment with him was indescribable."

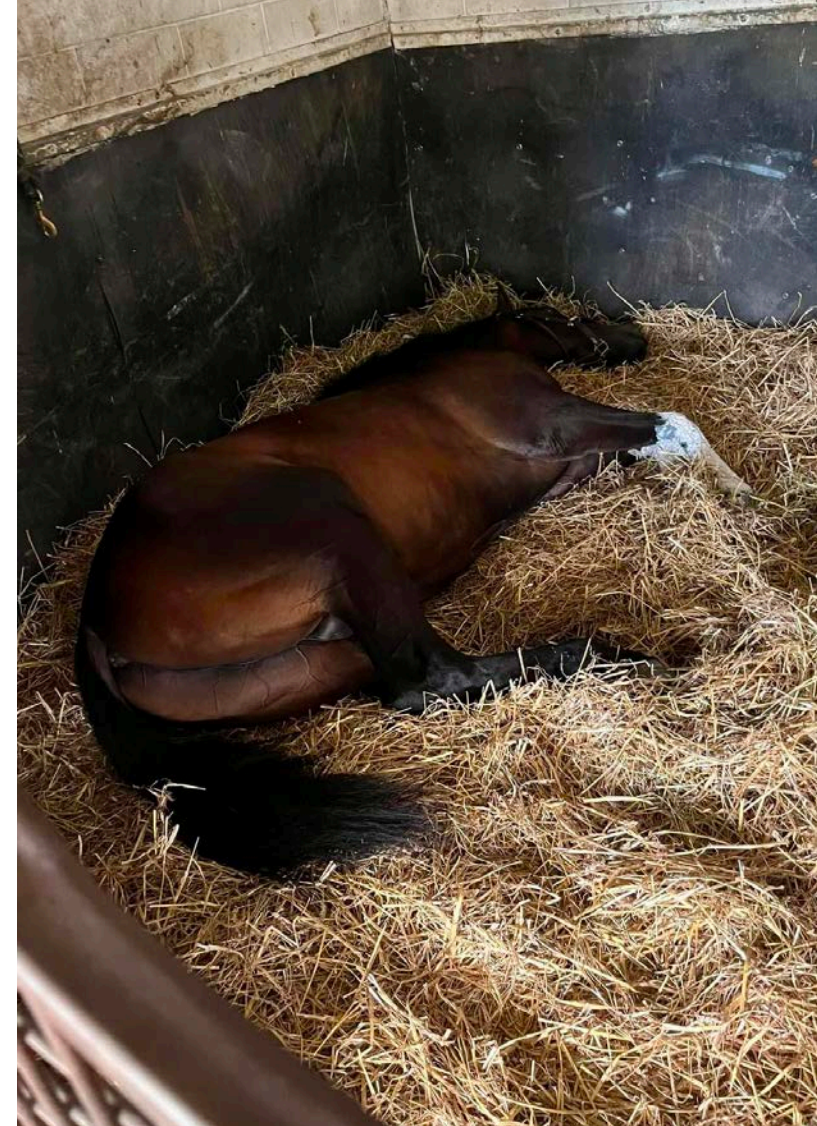
"My dad has one more dream and that is to run a horse on the turf at Saratoga. So, if there is a race for him in August, I will personally drive No More Options to Saratoga and watch my dad run this horse there."

What three words best describe No More Options?

"Lazy. Lovable. Loyal."

How has he changed your life?

"I get to talk to my dad every day because of horses. Whether it's No More Options, Make No Mistake or other horses in our lives, we talk every day. It's a gift for me. The horses are a gift."



How would you best describe No More Options?

"He is just the perfect horse. If I had to pick a horse out of 1,000 horses, he would be the perfect one. (Woodbine race announcer) Robert Geller and (Woodbine on-air personality) Jeff Bratt have come to visit him at the barn – this horse is just the sweetest thing you will ever meet. When you walk up to him, he will lean out and put his head on your shoulder. He is just amazing."

"When it comes to racing, Ryan (jockey, Munger) said, 'You don't know what you have underneath you until you let him go. But when he goes, he goes.'"

"Right now, he's at a farm near the restaurant I own

in Ocala. My dad and I visit him every day. We just watch him lying there in the sun – he does that all day long. My dad got out of the car and he came over and they played together. When my dad and I were driving out, "Options" trotted beside us the whole way around the field. My dad got out of the car again and he got a big kiss."

"And this horse loves his groom, Henry Miller. That man gets up at three in the morning and sits with this horse all day – that is how much he is loved."

What is your most vivid memory of his Frost King Stakes win?

"Did I expect it? No. We always had claiming horses for the most part, so for us to be in that environment,

The Racer's Edge

A Handicapping Primer

By Larry Simpson

A Question of Saving Your Investment! When Is An Opinion, An Opinion?

With the significant recent increase in both our magazine's readership and the listenership of 'Ponies 24-7, THE RADIO MAGAZINE', we thought it would be fitting to include this handicapping feature, which was very well received in an earlier edition of PONIES 24-7, several years ago.

Picture this, you are *'alive'* on three longshots after the first two legs of a Pick 3 wager! Should you be lucky enough and win the final leg, your initial investment of \$48.00 may seem a little paltry, compared to what the Pick 3 probables are indicating what you could collect should you *'hit'* the Pick 3-\$250.00, \$740.00 or \$880.00. However, what if none of your selections win the third leg? Have you perhaps wasted an opportunity that maybe could have been prevented through some insurance or what back in the day we referred to as *'saver'* bets on the remaining six horses in the field- or maybe you just take a stand and *'roll the dice'* so to speak and let the chips fall where they may!

There is no easy answer or hard fast rule when it comes to the concept of *'saving'*, as money management experts will tell you that it is not a good idea to spread the remainder of the field with insurance bets. Instead, they are under the belief that when it comes to selecting horses, an opinion is, well just that, an opinion, no matter how many actual races it takes for the outcome to be known. If you have played the wager with the understanding that you have a strong opinion on the race, then the actual outcome of the bet and in this case the result of the third leg, should be allowed to play itself out, without having to increase your overall investment and cutting into your profit margins. With that being said though, let it be known that there are still many handicappers who can't resist the temptation to protect what could be a major *'score'*, by purchasing what could be considered a form of *'wagering insurance'*. In addition, it should also go on record, that all wagering scenarios are different and all *'players'* very different, however, one may consider asking themselves the following questions before actually making the final decision about whether to invest in some *'saver'* bets or not.

#1: How strong do you really feel about your wager?

Look at your selections and honestly try to estimate what

you believe would be your chances of winning, as you go into the third leg of your Pick 3 wager. If you feel that your winning chances are better than 66 per cent range, then maybe some *'saving action'* is not necessary as your betting position can be considered to be somewhat strong. On the other hand, if you feel that perhaps your chances of winning fall between the 33 per cent and 66 percent range, you are actually in what could be considered a moderate position and *'saving'* maybe should be taken under advisement. Mind you, if your chances of winning are less than 33 per cent, then no question about it, some *'saving'* action should not be considered! In the latter case scenario, your actual investment position was weak to begin with and putting up more cash will only increase your vulnerability on the down side.

#2: How large of an investment did you make initially?

If your investment was only small to start with, there really is no reason to even consider a *'saver'* bet. If it's moderate, again you may wish to consider a *'saver wager'*, but if it was a larger investment to start, then playing a *'saving'* bet becomes the absolute!

#3: Will further investment put you in a profitable position?

Keep in mind though, that you are not making *'saving bets'* for the sake of breaking even and also, it is not a good financial practice to invest more money on your *'saver bets'*, than on your original investment.

Question Number 4 and a very important one, just how strong do the race favorites look in the last leg?

If you consider them to be *'live'* and you already have them on your Pick 3 ticket, then don't even consider making a *'saver bet'*, however, if you believe that they are false or vulnerable favorites and for this reason you bet against them in the first place, then stand by your original opinion and don't play a *'saver.'* But if you played against them for the sake of hitting a *'big score'*, then playing an insurance bet is not really



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a bad option to consider. Perhaps locking the favorites up in an exactor box with your *'pricey'* selections may be the route to go, especially in the case if one of your horses races well, but ends up finishing second behind a *'well meant'* favorite. Trust me, we all have been the victim of the latter case scenario, when the difference of a nose or a neck, has made all of the difference in the world between cashing a healthy Pick 3 ticket, or leaving the racetrack muttering to ourselves!

Question Number 5: Are there some longshots in the field that you originally thought were live, but you had to leave off of your ticket?

Remember, in our lead paragraph, it was mentioned that a total of \$48 had already been invested in our Pick 3 ticket and if we added more longshots to the ticket, it would have only increased our initial wager to an amount that we really couldn't afford to spend. If you answered no to Question 5,

where in your opinion there weren't any other contenders, then making some *'insurance wagers'* makes no sense at all. But, if the favorite does look weak on paper and you simply couldn't use all of the longer priced horses on your ticket that you thought were contenders, then maybe you should consider placing *'saver'* win bets on these longshots, providing that you are receiving *'good value'* on the win end. Again, don't be placing *'saver bets'* just to break even, rather, you want to retain some profitability at the end of the final leg of the Pick 3.

Some added words of advice on placing *'saving'* wagers – don't even consider playing a *'saver'* bet until you have reached the final leg of a multiple-race play.

Editor's Note- This installment of the Racer's Edge will be of interest to both Thoroughbred and Standardbred Handicappers.



Michael Burns Photo



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OPENING DAY SATURDAY, APRIL 19 | POST TIME 5:05PM*

APRIL						
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STAKES HIGHLIGHTS						
MAY 26: NYSS 3-Year-Old Colt Trot, NYSS 3-Year-Old Filly Trot						
JUNE 13: \$500K Empire Breeders Classic Finals 3-Year-Old Colt & Filly Trot, NYSS 3-Year-Old Colt Pace						
JUNE 20: NYSS 3-Year-Old Filly Pace						
JULY 3: \$600K Zweig Memorial 3-Year-Old Colt & Filly Trot, NYSS 2-Year-Old Filly Pace						
JULY 25: NYSS 2-Year-Old Filly Trot						
AUGUST 16: NYSS 2-Year-Old Colt Pace						
AUGUST 29: NYSS 2-Year-Old Colt Trot						
OCTOBER 4: Big Apple Eliminations - All 2-Year-Old Divisions						
OCTOBER 11: \$1 Million Big Apple Finals - All 2-Year-Old Divisions						

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