

Reader Forum

Internet Wagering Damaged Racing

In his January letter, Jason Settlemoir didn't mention what I think is one of the most damaging things affecting harness racing—Internet wagering, which returns nothing to the horsemen or tracks. Of course, it will probably take federal action to correct this.

Bob Cain, Delaware, Ohio

Keep Debating Shoes

As a Standardbred lover, trainer and fan, I must say it was refreshing to have Mr. Dickerman respond to my "shoes or no shoes" idea.

As a trainer, I would say new shoes would be a shoe change since the horse's last race. Any trainer worth his salt knows whether or not his horse needs new shoes before his next race. I used to second-train for Allen Tomlinson, a very good trainer and excellent blacksmith. I can remember many times that Allen spent the race

day putting on new shoes before heading for the track.

He didn't decide that day that the horse needed new shoes. He'd say several days in advance, Triple H, Jannis, or whoever the horse was, had to be shod before they raced.

I think all trainers in Michigan know, usually in late October or early November, it is time to put on the borium. Adding a couple new borium nails isn't quite the same as a new shoeing job, and every trainer has at one time or another had to get the track blacksmith to scramble and replace a shoe after one was thrown warming up.

My biggest point was that new shoes do help most horses, especially over a set that's been raced on two or three times (plus the jogging, training and paddock time). I can remember when the new sulky design came along. For a while the horses with the new sulky were winning every race. After about a month a new sulky design

notation was added to the program. They took that off after the sulkies were changed by the USTA rule, and all the old ones were obsolete.

My biggest point of all is that harness racing is in a very tough situation with the economy. Anything we can do to help the sport needs to be looked at.

New shoes or old? The debate goes on.

Sam Young, Wittensville, Ky.

Show Some Emotion I

Regarding the November story, "Fan Friendly," the more drivers can interact with the fans, the better. Showing emotion only makes them more approachable and human and when they mingle with the fans after a great race they represent our sport on a whole other level. It draws the crowd to them and initially into our sport as well. Contact with the crowds is necessary. Since that is not an easy task for



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Reader Forum

the other stars, the horses, the drivers must!

Jennifer Brown, Upper Sandusky, Ohio

Show Some Emotion II

I think driver showmanship helps sell the races. The winning horse and driver could bow like Roy Rogers and Trigger, and it would get me, my daughter and my grandchildren out to the races.

Vic Yankitis, Marietta, Ga.

A Great Man

I have had the privilege of knowing Jim Ewart for over 35 years. I not only worked for him and with him, but also am a friend of his and his wonderful wife, Sandy. He certainly taught me a great deal, including how to play "HORSE" on the basketball court many years ago. The December article on him was deserving for not only a great race secretary, but a greater man!

Robin Burns, Buffalo Raceway

Correcting Hoffman's Analysis

I obviously read with great interest the recent column by Dean Hoffman regarding two of our most recent additions to the stallion barn at Hanover—Somebeachsomewhere and Well Said. While I do not agree with all of the opinions Dean expresses in the column, I do realize they are just that, opinions. However, there is one sentence in the column that comes across as fact and I feel it necessary to correct it.

The sentence read, "I've heard people say that Well Said is an awfully small and fine horse, and he is that."

For the record, I measure the height and length of all of our new stallions the day they arrive, and Well Said stands a solid 15.3 hands at the withers, which is actually above average for a Standardbred. While I would not describe him as heavy-boned or coarse by any stretch of the imagination, nor would I consider him awfully fine. In fact, I have only seen one other Standardbred as beautiful as Well Said, and that would be The Panderosa.

Somebeachsomewhere, by contrast, is not as big and massive as

people think he is. Dean implied that he is a big, bulky horse, and he is not. In fact, on the day he arrived, Somebeachsomewhere measured 16 hands, only one inch taller than Well Said, and both horses are the same length (Beach has probably grown an inch in the year he has been here, as I expect Well Said will).

While Beach certainly has more bone than Well Said, he is by no means coarse or bulky.

It is my opinion that most people think Well Said is smaller than he really is and Beach bigger than he really is. That may be due to the amount of bone they have, the way they carried their heads when racing (Beach raced with his head high and had a huge stride, thus making him appear bigger than he was), or the shapes of the heads themselves. I am not sure.

But for all you breeders out there deciding on booking your mares, these two stallions may be different physical types, but neither horse is an extreme—small or big.

Dr. Bridgette Jablonsky,
manager, Hanover Shoe Farms

CLARIFICATIONS:

In the story "Born to Greatness" in the January issue, the following accomplishments should also have been credited to Noble Victory:

- He was the first Standardbred to bring \$1 million when he was syndicated by Alan Leavitt.
- He was the first stallion to sire two 2:00 trotting performers in his first crop.
- Although he was limited in his starts at 4, Noble Victory succeeded in setting seven records at seven tracks in seven weeks.

In the "Creative Art" story in the February issue, Bob Marks clarified his remarks with the following statement: "What I said was, to make a syndicate attractive, you might allow an extra breeding per share in the understanding that if a foal occurs, it becomes a payable booking. With older or less relevant horses, one might adopt a policy for multiple breedings where you pay for three live foals and get the fourth free, assuming, of course, you get four live foals."

Hoof Beats appreciates the clarifications.

We welcome your input. Here's how to reach us.

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